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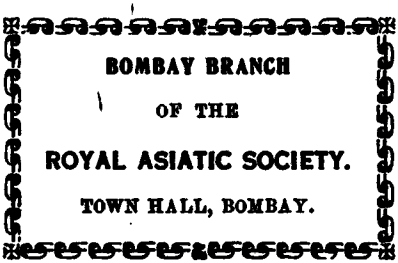

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A DIPLOMATIST'S WIFE IN MANY LANDS

VOL. II.

Mary C. Fraser

A DIPLOMATIST'S WIFE IN MANY LANDS

BY

MRS. HUGH FRASER

Author of "A Diplomatist's Wife in Japan," etc.

WITH 18 ILLUSTRATIONS

INCLUDING 2 PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECES

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CHAPTER XIX

1867—AN ANXIOUS YEAR FOR ROMANS

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FROM 1864 to 1866 the French troops were gradually being withdrawn from Rome, in accordance with the arrangement entered into between Napoleon III. and Victor Emmanuel, the latter having given his word that in return for this concession to Italian sensibilities the Pope should never be molested in the diminished territory which still remained to him. So, on the 11th of December, 1866, the last detachment of French soldiers embarked at Civita Vecchia for Marseilles, and the garrisoning of the city devolved upon the Pontifical Zouaves, a corps of volunteers of various nationalities, first inaugurated in the troubles of 1860, by General Lamoricière, under the title of the Légion d'Antibes. Since that time their numbers had considerably increased,

and by the end of 1866 they were so strong and well disciplined that they were felt to be quite competent to protect the Holy Father from any attacks of irresponsible revolutionaries, the only danger apparent, since the King had so publicly and so solemnly disavowed the old Cavour programme of annexing Rome and the Papal domains.

The Zouaves have been variously described as "greedy mercenaries," "penniless adventurers," and "rabid fanatics" in the Papal cause, and the existence of this great body of "alien mercenaries" in the heart of the country is stated, in histories written to-day, to have constituted a standing danger to the peace of Italy. As a matter of fact their pay was merely nominal, the gentlemen among them refusing to receive any at all. Quarters were provided for them by the authorities, and rations, uniforms, and weapons supplied, the general expenses being chiefly borne, so far as I can remember, by the Catholic gentlemen, men belonging to some of the oldest and noblest families in Europe, who marched cheerfully in the ranks shoulder to shoulder with devout peasants and working-men from Tyrol, Bavaria, Ireland, and other Catholic countries. They certainly intended to resist any encroachments on the Holy Father's possessions, but the peace—if such we can call the condition of Italy at that time—could only be disturbed by marauders from without, not by sober defenders within, and the boldest of calumniators never accused Pius IX. of any intention of invading his neighbour's territory, or even of attempting to recover the possessions of which he had been already deprived.

But for the presence of the Zouaves Rome would have been anything but a safe and pleasant residence

during those years of the gradual French evacuation, since the Italian Government could not—or, more probably, would not—control the hordes of Garibaldians and Mazzinists who were constantly harrying our borders and stirring up revolution by every means in their power. As it was, things went fairly quietly for a time; the Zouaves, in their picturesque Algerian uniforms, adding a pleasing note of life and colour in public, and a good deal to the gaiety of social reunions. At the time when I began to go out in the world their Commander was the Marquis de Charette, a fiery Vendéen who afterwards led a stubborn resistance against the Prussian invaders of his own country. He was a fine disciplinarian, and took pride in the fact that not one of his heterogeneous corps had ever made or got into trouble in the city. In private life he was the cheeriest of men, and an admirable dancer, with the delightfully urbane manners of the now extinct French aristocrat. Even an apparently hopeless love affair never lessened his gay good-humour. He refused to be refused, and seemed so sure of winning his point in the end that the young lady finally found it impossible not to agree with him, although she was almost as self-willed as he. Nobody was surprised at his constancy and devotion. Antoinette Polk was, as her name implies, a Southern girl, and came of good stock, prominent for many years in American politics, which had, in the person of General Polk (her cousin or uncle, I forget which), manfully upheld the cause of Southern independence in the Civil War.

Antoinette, with her mother and younger sister, spent two or three winters in Rome, and received enough admiration to turn the head of any ordinary girl. But she was not that. Like my other friend, Lily Theodoli,

she had grown up with the quiet consciousness of beauty and never gave a thought to her appearance. Her colouring was peculiar—a clear, pale, and rather dark complexion, eyes so full of fire and laughter that sometimes they were brown, sometimes black, sometimes the colour of agate seen through sunny water; and hair, reaching to her knees, of the brightest golden chestnut. Her figure was superbly buoyant, her voice the rich, lazy voice of the Southern woman, and she possessed, with all her indolent ways, a vitality and a magnetism that made her presence as healthful and reviving as a breeze from the sea. The one thing she really loved was riding, and it was a pleasure to see her in the hunting-field, where she and two fair-haired Austrians, Comtesse Windischgrätz and her sister, were generally better mounted than any one else, and could be counted upon to follow to the bitter end; and Roman foxes run true and far, taking the hunt on one occasion, I remember, very nearly over the border into the Kingdom of Naples.

Antoinette was a born horsewoman, and had, on one memorable night during the Civil War, performed a feat which would have tasked the endurance and courage of a strong man. The Polk house was, if I remember rightly, in Kentucky, the would-be neutral State which became the hottest fighting-ground in the Union before all was over. The plantation had already been visited by the Federals, who had wreaked their wrath on it, driving away the negroes, carrying off whatever appealed to their requirements, and leaving Mrs. Polk and her daughters the wreck of a once luxurious home. One old slave had managed to remain with the desolate women, otherwise they were quite alone, and took turns

in keeping watch for the approach of friend or foe. News somehow reached them that a large body of Confederate troops was due to pass that way, and they were bewailing their inability to offer hospitality and refreshment to the beloved "Boys in Grey," when one evening, just as the dusk was falling, two Federal officers rode up to the door and demanded information as to the position of the "rebels." They must have known very little of the spirit of Southern women if they expected to get it.

Antoinette, who was as clever as she was pretty, drew the strangers into conversation, and they, dazzled and charmed, so far lost their heads as to tell her whom they were scouting for and the strength that was following them. She realized that the Confederates, fewer in numbers and unaware of the vicinity of the enemy, would march straight into a trap unless warning could be conveyed in time. Taking advantage of the increasing darkness, she edged her mother into the forefront of the colloquy, slipped round the corner of the house, saddled a horse which had escaped the attention of the last visitors, and dashed out alone into the night to find her countrymen and make them change their course. It was a long, wild ride, involving more than one close shave of being caught by the scouts the Northerners had sent out in various directions; the Confederate soldiers were still many miles away, but she found them at last, delivered the message, and then rode back again, reaching home in the dawn, half-dead with fatigue and excitement, but only thinking of her mother's anxiety and of the little sister's fear at finding that they two were deprived of her own sustaining presence and unfailing resourcefulness. Years afterwards Antoinette

met Whyte Melville at some dinner-party, and he asked her to describe the experience, which struck him as a fine bit of copy. She did so at last, most unwillingly—not from any particular humility, but because the strenuous things of life did not appeal to the indolently happy temperament of the born Southerner, cradled in a kind of Imperial laziness by crowds of devoted slaves who would have been hurt and scandalized at seeing their "Missy" do the smallest thing for herself. Yet, when the time came, these pretty, useless Southern women took up the hardest menial labours, cooked and scrubbed, and even chopped wood for their own fires, as one of our friends was obliged to do for months, all without a murmur, and with a "go" and efficiency that left nothing to be desired. I have always said that as a companion on a desert island I would rather have an aristocrat than any working-man. The latter would kick and grumble—the former would brace to the occasion like a soldier to a campaign.

It took the Marquis de Charette several years to win his wife, but they were gloriously contented afterwards. A mutual friend, Comtesse Batthyany, came to see me after she had been staying with them in 1881.

"My dear," she exclaimed, "Antoinette has got a baby—a son, just like herself, and Charette says he will have to chain her down, she is so wildly, ridiculously happy!"

I was glad to hear that their life was so sunny, for Charette had passed through some sad, stern moments himself, first in Italy and then in France, some ten years before.

I was not "out" and had not made his acquaintance when, towards the end of September 1867, we returned

from our summer travels, delighted, as we always were, to find ourselves at home again in the familiar atmosphere of the old palace. But our pleasure turned to anxious excitement when it became known that Garibaldi was on the war-path again, and his emissaries moving about in Rome itself, attempting to get up another revolution. The removal of the French garrison had proved too strong a temptation for the veteran disturber of the peace. After six months of secret preparation, he had issued, in July, one of his fiery proclamations, calling on the Romans to rise and expel the Papal Government and informing all "good Italians" that it was their duty to help forward the expected revolt. There were plenty of disaffected persons in Rome ready enough to listen to his seditious appeal. They were generally discontented members of the "mezzo ceto," the middle-class people, who, whatever their wealth or attainments, have been unable to obtain recognition from the sternly exclusive Roman aristocracy. To these were added a certain number of the working class, men whose passions had been inflamed to anarchic violence by the propaganda of free-masons and socialists. Contemptible as such opponents were in themselves, when strengthened by numbers of new arrivals financed and coached by Garibaldi's "National Committee of Italian Independence" they had created for some months a very dangerous and unmanageable element in the city and suburbs.

Garibaldi's first attempt to bring his secretly organized force to invade Rome, in the summer, had been promptly quelled by the Italian Government, terrified at the prospect of Napoleon III.'s wrath should the guarantee for the Pope's immunity from disturbance be publicly broken. It produced a fine dramatic effect by having Garibaldi

arrested and sent back to Caprera, but no steps were taken to control the great bands of his followers who poured into the Pope's dominions with the avowed object of inciting his subjects to revolt. A few months later Garibaldi was quietly allowed to escape from Caprera, sound his old war-cry, and lead a new expedition towards Rome, where he believed his shabby adherents would be strong enough to open the gates to him.

One fine morning in October we woke up to find ourselves under martial law. General Kanzler was in command of the city and his orders were searching enough. All subjects of foreign nationalities were to display the flag of their country from a window of their domicile, but even this proof of neutrality did not qualify them to show lights in their windows later than nine o'clock at night, after which hour no private person might traverse the streets without a pass. All loitering for conversation in the public squares was forbidden, a bitter privation to the Roman young men, accustomed to pass the entire afternoon chatting with their friends on a couple of blocks of the Corso. And—most alarming regulation of all—any one wearing the smallest touch of red, the Garibaldian emblem, was to be arrested at once! This last provision seems rather puerile, but red was the colour and the badge of the revolutionists, and they had found it only too useful for distinguishing fellow-conspirators from honest citizens for many months past. The only persons who were still allowed to wear the fatal colour were the peasants, of whom a good number lived in certain poor quarters of the town, plying rough trades always abandoned to them. Many women of this class were in the habit of coming in from the outlying country every day to

sell fruit and vegetables; their bright costumes were often heirlooms; the materials were expensive and almost everlasting, and it would have been a terrible hardship for them to have to procure quieter-looking garments on short notice.

The Roman peasant woman often wraps her head up in a small scarlet cloth shawl, leaving little but eyes and nose to be seen, a fancy which afforded some of our would-be invaders an admirable chance of slipping into the town muffled up as fruit-selling contadine. Thus disguised Garibaldi himself was identified by various people, and, I imagine, owed his immunity from arrest to the fact that neither Pius IX. or General Kanzler nor any one else—with one exception—would have known what on earth to do with him. The exception would have been Cardinal Antonelli, who would not have hesitated for a moment about finding a quiet and silent end for the old pirate had he been handed over to him. But that far the other Roman authorities were not prepared to go—there was Europe at large to be considered; so, although the disguise was a mere farce and the wearer of it closely watched, he crept in and out in safety, as did his son Menotti, whom I believe I met several times in the course of the limited walks which my mother still permitted me to take under sufficient escort. I cannot imagine why I, a very quietly dressed young girl, attracted the attention of this undesirable gentleman, but I became unpleasantly aware that I met him day after day, a tall, gaunt figure, all too masculine for the voluminous skirts which did not hide the heavily booted feet, striding towards me as if by preconcerted arrangement. The head and shoulders were swathed in a closely held shawl which only allowed the upper part

of the face to be seen—but in that the resemblance to Garibaldi was striking. As we passed each other the creature always paused for a moment and fixed me with a glance of hateful triumph from the big, piercing black eyes. I could *feel* the sardonic smile which touched the mouth under the folds of the shawl—and at last I grew so frightened that I did not care about leaving the house.

We heard of several arrests of disguised revolutionaries having been made, but Menotti's illicit appearances were carefully overlooked. He would have been almost as inconvenient a captive as his father.

Towards the end of the month, when we were growing very tired of dull evenings and empty streets—with only a sentinel or so pacing our Piazza at night under orders to fire at any lights shown in windows—when the nerves of our noble landlady, the Princess Odescalchi, who detested foreigners, were worn to breaking point by seeing the American flag flaunting from the second-storey windows, the city suddenly grew very quiet. Many of the Garibaldian sympathizers went out to meet their friends who had gathered in force so near as Monte Rotondo, a little place not far from Rome, and those who remained wisely lay low till the result of the now inevitable struggle should be declared. By this time a strong contingent of French troops had been sent to Rome in response to the Pope's indignant appeal. The King of Italy and his Government were having one of their timely attacks of paralysis, and declared themselves quite unable to control their insubordinate hero and his followers, backed up as these were by so-called national sentiment. The old policy of giving Garibaldi his head, disavowing him if he failed, reaping all the advantages of his action if he succeeded, had answered so well in

former cases that they could safely trust to it once more. So he brought his fourteen thousand bravos down to Monte Rotondo and took the town, inflicting some loss on the Papal troops, and, flushed with easy victory, moved on to Mentana.

Those were anxious days for us Romans; the uncertainty was so great as to what the Garibaldians had arranged to do, through their sympathizers, within the city itself, as soon as those outside should have come near enough to get into effectual touch with them. We were, indeed, far more uneasy—especially in view of the memories of 1849—in view of the revolutionary party that might at any moment be expected to spring into activity within the walls of Rome, than in regard to their avowed partisans outside. And our fears were not misplaced; so inspired had the revolutionaries become by the proximity of their confederates, out there at Mentana, that they repeatedly threw off the mask. Again and again they could be heard crying "Death to the priests!" late at night in the lonely streets of the remoter quarters; and then would follow the distant shots and confusion, although the picket often only reached the spot to find it deserted. One day, however, the whole city was startled by a muffled roar up towards the Serristori barracks of the Zouaves; it was an attempt to blow up the barracks on the part of the revolutionaries in the city, and had been timed to coincide with a simultaneous Garibaldian attack on the Porto San Paolo. Fortunately it took place two minutes too late—just that length of time earlier an entire company of Zouaves had left the barracks to repel the Garibaldian attack; but, as it was, some twenty or so lost their lives. A few days later the Zouaves had their revenge: I am

afraid that to many of their friends in Rome—myself included—the victory of Mentana was productive of most uncharitable sentiments of retaliative triumph, when we remembered the victims of the Serristori barracks.

Events succeeded each other very quickly ; the news of the taking of Monte Rotondo by the Garibaldians on the 26th of October was followed, the next day, by General Kanzler's setting out from Rome with the Papal Zouaves to meet the invaders, and give them battle before they should come nearer to the city. For several days we were left without troops in Rome until the French arrived on the 30th under General Abel Douay—a stranger to us—who was afterwards killed at Weissenburg in the summer of 1870. Kanzler, we learned, who had found Garibaldi entrenched in front of Mentana, ten miles away from Porta Pia along the Via Nomentana, was waiting to attack until Douay should be able to support him from Rome—no excessive caution since Kanzler had only five thousand Zouaves with which to attack some fourteen thousand opponents in positions of their own choosing!

On the 3rd of November the French marched out in the direction of Mentana, and we were left in suspense as to what the far-off occasional firing, borne back to Rome on the wind, might portend for us all, during many anxious hours. From noon on the churches were full of people praying for the preservation of the city from the horrors of Garibaldian occupation.

No one who has not been through hours such as those spent by us that November day in the wake of a decisive battle, not knowing—hardly daring even to guess—what night would bring with it, can imagine the ages of acute, frightful depression and uncertainty that

seemed to elapse in that short time from midday, when we first heard the sound of the distant firing, until towards evening when it ceased. All through the day people had been coming and going, mostly on horseback, between Porta Pia and the country beyond, but no one seemed to know anything for certain, although I think we all felt a sense of stability and reassurance when the Angelus began to ring out over the troubled city as usual, after sunset. Lily Conrad came over to look in on us during the early part of the afternoon, if I remember rightly, and very loth were we to let her go away again, back through the excited crowds that swarmed the streets to her home in the old part of the city. Her stepfather, Marchese Cavalletti, who was one of the Noble Guard and a great favourite of Pius IX., was passing the afternoon in attendance on the Pope at the Vatican. The Holy Father himself spent the greater part of the day in prayer, and there was little else but anxiety and silence through all the great Palace by St. Peter's. But even there no definite news could have arrived of the results of the battle till far into the night, or all Rome would have known of it at once. As it was, we heard nothing of the actual extent of the victory until the next morning, albeit we all felt sure that the Garibaldians must have received a very severe check, or they would have forced the Papal troops back upon Porta Pia.

By morning, however, the good news was all over the town, filtering in at first by many divers channels, rather than by any single defined announcement, as is often the case. Hope turned gradually to certainty and then to rejoicing; towards breakfast-time the news that a proclamation had been posted up at the Can-

celleria, telling of a complete victory, reached us at Palazzo Odescalchi; the crisis was over, and Rome rejoiced in Roman fashion. The shops that had been closed during the preceding day for fear of a Garibaldian sack of the city were thrown open once more; the requirements of martial law in respect of public meeting were relaxed, and their infringement winked at; very soon there was not a cab to be had anywhere in the streets, nearly all having been requisitioned, either to take sightseers out to the battlefield or for purposes of ambulance.

The fighting must have been of an unusually bitter character on both sides, according to those who took part in it, as well as those who only saw the field afterwards. The French officers said that the Garibaldians seemed to have something of the desperate courage of the soldiers of the Revolution; certainly they fought well in most cases. The only gleam of humour I remember that relieved the sadness at thought of so many killed and wounded, both Garibaldian and Papalini—for after the fighting was over no one distinguished between friends and former foes in that respect—was afforded by the account that came in of how Garibaldi himself, the "Cromwell of Caprera," the "Scourge of the monks," had left his followers to shift for themselves when Mentana had been stormed, and had taken refuge in a church, where he was subsequently found hiding in a confessional!

During all that day and for several to come the carts and carriages kept plying between Rome and the battlefield with their freights of wounded, of seekers after friends and relatives, and of priests and doctors. Never was the charity of the Romans to friend and

From an engraving after Gio. Batt. Piranesi

THE PALAZZO ODESCALCHI

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foe more strikingly shown than in those days after Mentana. One of the most typical incidents of the time was, I think, the unexpected visit of the Pope to where the greater number of the sixteen hundred prisoners taken by his soldiers had been lodged in the castle of Sant' Angelo. It was not yet known what would be his decision regarding them; for, as a temporal sovereign, it must be remembered that he had a right to dispose of such revolutionaries—many of them his own subjects—in any way he pleased.

One may well picture, therefore, their astonishment at seeing him enter the apartment in which they were confined one morning, accompanied by a single ecclesiastic and the Commandant of the fortress. To say the least of it, the unfortunate captives were dismayed. They imagined the Holy Father to have come thus unexpectedly with some purpose of giving directions for courts-martial; what must their amazement have been when he smiled reassuringly at them! "You see before you, my children," he said, "the man whom your general calls the 'Vampire of Italy.' It is against me you have taken up arms. And who am I? A poor old man—just that—*un povero vecchio.*"

With which he began to walk about among them, making friends of them as only Pio Nono could do; no father could have been kinder to those poor prodigal sons than he. How he inquired as to the necessities of each one; how he consoled and comforted and forgave; how he promised that he would supply them with clothes and money, and defray the expenses of all to their homes, is a matter of history. But to those Garibaldian prisoners it was a revelation of the man, and they surrendered for the second time; some

fell upon their knees and implored his forgiveness, whilst others crowded round him, crying like children, and kissing his hands and his cloak.

Pio Nono himself was, perhaps, as much affected by their repentance and gratitude as they by his generosity. It was with difficulty that he made a single request of them before leaving them and going back to his carriage. After solemnly blessing them and their families, he said, "All I ask of you is that, as Catholics, you will often remember me in a short but heartfelt prayer to God." And with that he left them, whilst the vaults rang again with their cheers in tribute to that truest of Christian gentlemen.

The gladness of the Romans themselves at their deliverance from the Garibaldians was very marked to us who had sometimes been in doubt as to the extent of revolutionary influence and opinion upon them. But I really think they had been terrified by the prospect of being once again at the mercy of the mob as they had been nearly twenty years before.

CHAPTER XX

THE LAST DAYS OF THE TEMPORAL POWER

The opening of the Vatican Council—The three degrees of the soul's life—A long wait and a wonderful spectacle—A crowded season—Prince Leopold of Sigmaringen—Arnim—Lord Bute—A colossal task—The Certosa di Pesio—A pleasant surprise—"Uncle Lear"—A prophetic experience—Beginning of the Franco-Prussian War—A month of disaster—My future brother-in-law at Gravelotte—"They do things better now!"

ON the 8th of December, 1869, I had the happiness of seeing the opening of the Œcumenical Council, a picture which after all these years still remains the most impressive and important of all my remembered gallery. In the dark hour before dawn I and the friend who accompanied me reached the vestibule of St. Peter's. We resolved to be in time to secure our apportioned places in the tribune close to the High Altar, and our zeal brought us to the locked doors of the church some two hours before they were opened. Yet we were not the first. Already numerous groups of people were gathered on the steps and in the portico, and as time passed on the crowd became so close that we were thankful to have escaped the necessity of standing in its midst and the danger of the rush when the doors should be opened. Looking down from where I stood on the top step, leaning against one of these, it seemed to me as if all Christendom were pouring into the

vast Piazza and surging up the noble and mild incline which leads to the vestibule. The growing light showed eager faces and contrasting costumes from distant countries, mingling with Rome's own population of soldiers and monks, seminarists and laymen, ladies in black lace veils and peasant women in their splendid blues and reds. The outer ring under the colonnades was bounded by troops, Zouaves and Swiss, who kept the line clear across Piazza Rusticucci and down the broad street towards the castle of Sant' Angelo, the road by which the Bishops of the world were to come, in answer to the Holy Father's summons, to define one more of the great truths delivered to the Apostles in the beginning, accepted through the ages, but now in the face of modern heresy and unbelief receiving the vindication of dogmatic pronouncement.

Ah, the giants Bramante and Michelangelo knew what they were doing when they designed the magnificent sweep of the approach to the Sanctuary which is the heart of the Catholic world! The three broad ways which lead to it from the river seem to call to all humanity, "Come, here is room for each family of God's children, the mystic, the fighter, the labourer—each shall find here the path to his soul's weal!" The three degrees of the Christian life seem to be typified there, the "Vie Purgative" in the converging highways, the "Vie Illuminative" when the vast circular space is reached and the vision of the Church in its surpassing beauty is first beheld; then, when the threshold is passed, the "Vie Unitive" in the boundless, impregnable peace which reigns within. At many and many a stage of my earthly pilgrimage I have broken away from the harassing contradiction and strife of existence and fled

to St. Peter's to sit for hours on the step of the great Confessional, too weary and sad to pray, but knowing that there was healing for my soul in the very air, that the kind and the mighty who reign there would take my burden from me and send me home strong and sane, relieved of all that makes sorrow intolerable.

But those days were still far off as I stood waiting for admission at the closed door on that dark December morning. The bolts were suddenly withdrawn at last, the portal swung open, and the next moment I was being carried up the centre aisle by the crowd behind —at a pace which I blush to think of now! A few minutes later we had found our seats and sank into them thankfully, for the press had been really rather alarming. By this time the daylight had come, and it was most interesting to watch, from our raised sheltered places, the mass of humanity stream in and, for once, I think, fill the Church, disproving the tradition that "in St. Peter's there is always room for one more." Hours still had to pass before the ceremonial would begin, but when at last the great procession defiled before our eyes we felt repaid for all the waiting. It would be impossible to imagine anything more splendid and complete. Two and two they came, those hundreds of shepherds from every quarter of the globe, venerable men of every leading race and type, from the Saxon to the Coptic, long white beards streaming over jewelled vestments, the wise and the holy and the proved; Missionary Bishops tanned and emaciated with their labours in exile, good, blue-eyed Germans, Greeks and Syrians who looked as if they had stepped down from Byzantine mosaics—verily one understood the meaning of the word "Catholic" that day! Last of all, Pius

the Ninth, "the Servant of the Servants of God," was borne up the aisle, blessing us all to right and left as he went. Behind him came the crowd of "camerlenghi" and Noble Guards, whose uniforms were hardly noticeable after the blaze of gold and colour in the Bishops' vestments. The solemn music was already ascending to the dome, and the thousands of tapers threw a soft glow on the rich, incense-laden air. The Pope's wonderful voice rang out in the pauses of the music—and to assist at a Mass which was said by Pius IX. was an illumination of spirit. The hush of awe fell on every heart as the consecration approached, and, in the dead silence before the Elevation, it seemed as if the Master of us all, shepherds and shepherded, were about to appear visible to our poor human eyes.

Years later I came across the poem in which F. W. Myers described that scene, in language that only he could have found for it, and only found then, before he had wandered into spiritistic darkness. His eyes saw the picture, his soul cried for the meaning, but his mind, the mind of the alien and the orphan, obscured that, and all that remained to him was a memorable emotion, translated to express the spiritual pride which is the heaviest, the most unremovable curse of error.

The Council attracted immense numbers to Rome that year, and the winter season was the most brilliant—the last brilliant one on record. I made interesting acquaintances, to the sound of much waltz music. One was Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern Sigmaringen, whose name was destined a few months later to be rather ingloriously connected with some of the greatest events in modern history—the downfall of Napoleon III. and the consolidation of the German Empire. I am sure

nature never intended him for anything so important. He was a pretty little prince, who danced extremely well, and had a talent for compliments. He always managed to tell a vain, excitable girl the one thing she was longing to hear about herself. Another *danseur* was Arnim—less attractive, but with a certain disagreeable power about him; an ugly man who seemed to see things as they were, and to realize that there was something in life beyond the wild round of dances which had to be crammed in between Christmas and Ash Wednesday, and the more chastened gaieties of theatricals and receptions which, alas! occupied our minds till towards the end of Lent. Arnim it was who, albeit accredited to the Vatican as Diplomatic representative of Prussia, was seen sitting on horseback among the Italian Staff when the Papal Zouaves marched past out of the city as prisoners in September 1870. Lord Bute, too, was there that year, and a good many other Englishmen of his class but not of his serious character. Although he went out everywhere and evidently enjoyed himself, he was always a thinker, to whom the highest subject of all—religion—was ever the most attractive. Long years afterwards, when he was married, he brought his wife to Sorrento and struck up a great friendship with my brother Marion. Marion, already shaken in health, took advantage of the broad dispensations in the matter of fasting granted to all brain-workers, and did not keep Lent very strictly, but he was much edified by the faithfulness of his guests to the Lenten precepts. When he remarked on it, the Marchioness replied simply: "You see, Bute and I are awfully fond of our food. Life is pretty easy for us in most ways, so if we want to give up anything we have to dock that."

Lord Bute's memory is held in benediction in Sorrento. After his first visit there, when he made the acquaintance of Monsignor Maresca, our saintly old friend, and learnt of the needs of the poor, he never failed to send money to be distributed in charity; and reaped the reward of benevolence in the shape of a new interest which greatly pleased his active mind—he conceived the desire to write the biographies of all our local Saints! That, in South Italy, would be a colossal task, for, thank God, there have been many. Unfortunately it is rather difficult to collect reliable data about them. Monsignor Maresca came to me one day to ask me to translate a letter which he had received from "Miladi Biutt-é," as he could not read English. When I explained to him that Lord Bute was asking him for portraits and lives of all the Neapolitan Saints, he threw up his hands in despair.

"Signora mia!" he exclaimed. "I am an old man! Had I begun this work in my youth I should scarcely have finished it now! I fear I cannot procure what Milord wishes, and this grieves me, for he has loaded us with benefits, and I would do anything to oblige him."

So Lord Bute had to give up the interesting plan, but he left behind him at least one monument of piety and learning, his marvellous translation of the Breviary into English. I picked it up one day in Marion's library, and was enthralled by it. "Yet," I said to my brother as I laid it down, "I like the Latin better; it seems more natural in its own language."

"I don't agree with you at all," Marion declared. "Lord Bute's English is so beautiful that I much prefer it to Church Latin."

For some reason we were drawn to choose quite a new spot for our villeggiatura in the summer of 1870,

a retreat in the Maritime Alps, of which till then I had seen very little. I think the train took us as far as Cour Mayeur, and from there we journeyed by carriage to the Certosa di Pesio, a huge monastery in the most lonely part of the hills, which had been converted into a summer hotel. The road ascended all the way through an almost unbroken forest of chestnut-trees, their cool, deep verdure striking very pleasantly on the senses after the two days of hot, dusty railway travelling. Towards evening we skirted a torrent, rushing far below us, and finally crossed it by an ancient stone bridge to drive under the archway of the Certosa itself: a huge, grey building with vast cloisters surrounding flowery court-yards. The bedrooms, wonderfully large and airy, all opened out of these cloisters, and of course the general dining-room was the former refectory. It was a particularly cheerful apartment, and when I came in to the midday breakfast, on the day after our arrival, I was dazzled by the floods of light and rather confused by the noise of sixty or seventy persons talking the ear-splitting Lombard dialect in the shrill Lombard voice. The language had no relation to any Italian I had ever heard, and carried as many "ngs" and "òüs" as Portuguese, together with sibilant "c's" and "s's" that emulated what foreigners call the hiss of English. Nothing gives me the blues like finding myself among people who speak a tongue I do not understand, and I slipped into my place beside my mother in deep dejection which must have shown itself in my face; for when I looked up to take stock of our neighbours, I became aware that a dear old gentleman on the opposite side of the long, narrow table was regarding me with benevolent if amused pity. He had a long white beard, and very bright eyes that

seemed to be watching a pleasant comedy all the time. After a few minutes he found occasion to offer me some small table-d'hôte civility, remarking at the same time: "It *is* rather confusing at first, but you will soon get accustomed to it!"

I never knew how musical an English voice could sound till that moment. Before the meal was over we were the best of friends, and my new acquaintance, remarking that my small sister Daisy, who sat beside me, was in trouble with her big knife and fork, produced a bit of paper and a pencil, and a few seconds later pushed across to her a delightfully funny drawing, with one of Edward Lear's immortal nonsense rhymes written below! That moment betrayed him to us. We knew all the "First Nonsense Book" by heart already, and that summer saw almost all that went to make the "Second Nonsense Book" written and illustrated for my fortunate little sister. Never was there a man who could so live into the feelings of a child. Daisy was a turbulent little creature, always getting into trouble of some kind, and from that first day she learnt to take her disasters to "Uncle Lear," as he taught her to call him, to have them turned into joys by his rhymes and pictures. A frightful bump on her forehead was the origin of the "Uncareful Cow," who got a similar one, and was horrified to find it growing into a third horn, which had to be rubbed away with camphor. The strange meats and unmanageable cutlery of the table-d'hôte inspired the marvellous botanical specimen "Manyforkia Spoonifolia," as well as most of the recipes for "Nonsense Cookery." But Uncle Lear did not always wait to be asked for his rhymes. Day after day Daisy would find on her plate some enchanting,

highly coloured sketch with an appropriate poem. We all felt enriched when "The owl and the pussy cat went to sea in a beautiful pea-green boat," and the mystery of the disappearance of "The Jumblies," who "*Never* came back to me!" had an alluring gloom even for us grown-ups.

All through that summer, which grew sadder and sadder as the storm of war broke over France and crept down across the Alps to prepare the Roman tragedy, dear Mr. Lear was an unfailing source of comfort and cheer to us all. He was one of the few Englishmen not spoilt by almost life-long residence in Italy, one who gave the lie to the Italian proverb "Un Inglese italianato è il Diavolo incarnato." And he knew his part of the world well, having travelled far enough from his home in San Remo to paint many delightful pictures of other places with pen and pencil. His big book on Corsica, which he sent me later, was one of my most treasured possessions. For all his bubbling love of fun he had a fine sense of the stern and dramatic, and I have seldom seen anything grimmer than his picture of a Corsican funeral—the stark corpse in everyday clothes tied in an upright sitting posture to a kind of gibbet strapped to the saddle of a mountain pony, the animal shivering with fright as it was led by two men over the tumbled rocks and boulders of a pass so steep that they could hardly keep their footing down to where it was possible to dig a grave and bring a priest to bless it.

But it was not for his serious work that we and the world loved Mr. Lear, not by that will he be remembered, but by the inexhaustible sweetness and spontaneousness of his fun, the blessed, innocent delight which

he brought into thousands of lives. One day he said to me confidentially, "My dear child, I'm sure we shall be allowed to laugh in Heaven!" He came to see us in Rome in succeeding years, and grew to be so much our own that after his death I sometimes fancied his spirit crept in among us, and added a note of gentle, ghostly mirth to our little gatherings. He had had heavy private sorrows, but they were never allowed to cloud the sunshine he so generously shed upon all who came near him.

I had at Pesio what I classified afterwards as a prophetic experience. I believe I have alluded to it in my record of life in Japan, but as I am never allowed to keep one of my humble works on my table for more than twenty-four hours I cannot verify the impression, and, if it is an exact one, must apologize for repeating myself. One hot morning in August I had wandered out across the bridge towards the woods, armed as usual with paint-box and camp-stool (for I always was an enthusiastic sketcher), when I beheld a picture such as never before—or for many years afterwards—broke on my astonished sight. Up the steep road, under the golden green shades of the chestnut branches, came a little white procession in single file. It was led by a venerable old man with a long, silvery beard; he was leaning on his staff, and gazing at the lovely scene with an expression of dignified rapture; he was dressed in spotless white linen, a robe having long white sleeves crossed over his bare chest and drawn up nearly to the girdle, displaying limbs encased in white strappings, which we should call puttees now, but which then only recalled the "cioccie" of the Abruzzi peasant. White linen footgear and white

sandals completed this unique costume. Behind him at a respectful distance of several yards followed another figure, young and graceful, dressed in the same way except that the tunic hung a little lower over the shapely limbs, and floated above the waist in loose folds which, as the breeze came down the valley, were blown against a gently feminine form. This second pilgrim had a charmingly youthful face, pale and oval, lighted up by a pair of mischievous black eyes, and she wore a girdle of faint sky-blue for a touch of colour. Behind her, nibbling leisurely at the fresh grass, came the third, a beautiful white nanny-goat, with fleece as silvery as the old gentleman's beard. All three looked as if they had just dropped from the Milky Way, in spite of the fact that they must have been walking for several hours, since there was no inn within appreciable distance of the Certosa.

I gave up all idea of sketching for that day, and, wondering whether I were not dreaming a fairy tale, withdrew to a discreet distance to watch the amazing party. One or two other guests from the hotel had wandered out for a morning walk and followed my example. The travellers glanced at us ; the girl laughed, the old man looked loftily amused; but our presence did not at all disturb their arrangements. Selecting a favourable spot under a big tree, they sat down, unpacked some airy-looking provisions from the white satchels they both carried, spread out tissue-paper napkins on the moss, and then the girl produced a shining pannikin and called to the goat. It trotted up to her obediently, and she milked it with the deftness of long practice. At this point I retired, feeling that visitors from another planet should be allowed to eat their mystic viands in peace. But they stayed near us all

day, evidently enjoying the freshness and shade of those deep, quiet woods. Towards evening they moved away, flitting off like white moths in the twilight of the ascending forest road, and we never saw them again. They had not exchanged a word with any one, and the language they spoke to each other, in strangely low, even tones, conveyed no meaning to the indiscreetly curious who had approached near enough to hear it.

It was twenty years before their origin was made clear to me—in Japan!

There was much that was delightful about that summer; the surroundings of the Certosa di Pesio are unusually beautiful, and I have always been surprised to find the place so little known as a resort except by the Italians themselves. The high valley leads away like a broad green road to one superb snow peak towering in the distance, ghostly blue at sunrise, marble white at midday, ruby rose at sunset, the matchless peak of Monte Rosa. To lovers of trees—and who does not love trees?—that part of the Maritime Alps is a paradise. There is little variety, it is true; the woods are all chestnut woods, but of an age and depth that make one want to climb up and build nests in their branches. There is no fear of their being destroyed, because the chestnut is the chief staple of food for the Lombardy peasant, who makes of it a brown cake palatable enough but miserably insufficient in nourishing qualities. Unless generously dosed with salt it produces the horrible disease known as "pellagra"—a scourge closely akin to leprosy in appearance and effects. The iniquitous salt tax had fallen like a sentence of death upon the country before I visited it, and among people less supine than the Italians would have produced a rebellion. It was the

forerunner of this murderous tax, in the shape of the "Gabelle," which finally precipitated the French Revolution. But the Italian Government knew its people. They ceased to buy salt, and many thousands of them succumbed to the loathsome scourge which was the result. As this dumb resignation brought no returns to the Treasury, an ingenious law was passed by which it became penal for every head of a family *not* to buy so many pounds of salt a year *per capita*, whether it could reasonably be consumed or not. No wonder that America is populated with Italian peasants! It is easier to emigrate than to support existence under such a Government at home! The upper classes seem to take no interest in the welfare of poorer compatriots, and it remains for indignant foreigners to protest, uselessly alas, against the latter's wrongs.

We had no poor near us at Pesio, however; they ceased to haunt the monastery gates after the good monks were expelled, and I must say that the faulty upper classes were very pleasantly represented there. There were several families from Milan and Turin, who, after regarding us rather suspiciously as foreign interlopers, took us into their affections and became friends of whom we did not lose sight in after-years, although we never got over our dislike of their horrible lingo and made but small progress in it despite their efforts to educate us up to its beauties. The invariable greeting, "Ciáo!" (pronounced "Chow"), sounded like the bark of a bad dog and was a very poor translation of our melodious "Buon giorno." They could talk nice clear Italian when they liked, but on the whole were happier in French, the true "lingua franca" of educated people all the world over.

My mother and I were grateful for their friendliness,

for before the summer was over we two, with my small brother and sister, were all that remained of the family for the moment. Marion was in Germany; Annie, wearying of domesticity, had gone off to the Engadine with some Roman friends; my stepfather, who had discovered Pesio for us, found when he got there that it did not agree with him, so we persuaded him to make a sadly needed journey to New York, to look into my mother's financial affairs, which had been rather badly mishandled after Uncle John's death. He left us unwillingly, for even during the first few weeks of our stay at Pesio a noticeable disquiet seemed to be encroaching on what we, with the rest of our little world, had imagined to be the beginning of a long and settled peace among the various nationalities of which cosmopolitan society was composed. But, on looking under the surface of things, when the news reached us at Pesio that unlucky, troubled Spain, to which no one had given much thought in the past, had invited a Prussian, Leopold of Hohenzollern Sigmaringen, to be King in place of Queen Isabella, the wiser among us shook their heads. France, they said, was still too jealous of Königgrätz to suffer such a thing as a Prussian on the Spanish throne without doing her utmost to prevent it; and soon we learned that the French Government had protested against the Prince's candidature. A few days later, those sufficiently interested among the guests of the Certosa mentioned that they had noticed in the papers that the King of Prussia had sanctioned the Prince's withdrawal from the candidature—and there, as we all supposed, the question would end. Indeed, it seemed hardly right to prolong it at a time of year when even the most hardworking officials were about to put

aside important business for at least a couple of months. As though to confirm this, King William of Prussia left Berlin and went to take the waters at Ems. Then again there came a lull for us at Pesio, until the evening of Thursday, the 14th of July, when, on returning from an outing in the hills, we found a copy of the now historic "Ems telegram" pinned up among the other news items on the notice board of the Certosa. That night at dinner tongues wagged freely, and many and divers were the speculations as to the outcome of the situation. The general consensus of opinion was that the King of Prussia ought to be put under restraint as a criminal lunatic. That night the sounds of packing were heard from more rooms than one; early in the morning there followed the rumbling of departures, and at the midday breakfast several faces were missing from among the number of our fellow-guests. I think it was then that the seriousness of the situation began to dawn upon us, when we realized that all the Germans and French had deemed it time for them to return to their countries. Our chief feeling was one of resentment—we were all heartily sick of war and its inconveniences. Not of course that affairs as they stood seemed likely to affect dwellers in Italy, but still a war meant the renewal of social divisions and estrangements, universal gloom, and "tightness" of money.

There still seemed to be some sort of hope, though, that it might be averted, until the reports dribbled in of the scenes in Paris on the reception of the "telegram"; after those, it appeared most unlikely to those who knew anything of the French Government that it would be able, even with the best of good will, to avert a war—it had no will of its own apart from that of the

mob that was crying "A Berlin!" under the very windows of the Tuileries. As for the Prussians, although one could hardly believe it, they seemed to take it for granted that there would be war; and this reminds me of a point which, in these days of Bismarck worship, may not be out of place here. Although he has always been accepted as the organizer of the general situation of 1870, yet I often think that poor Benedetti was right in declaring as he used to do that Bismarck was never, with all his ability, anything more than the instrument of another man, whose real astuteness and far-seeing, deep-laid policy were concealed under the unassuming exterior of a simple soldier—William of Prussia. This may not be acceptable to every one; but, for myself, I think there is something to be said for the opinion of one who had had the experience of both that Benedetti had had. The only case in which it was clear that Bismarck's had been the brain to conceive the stratagem was that of the "Luxemburg letters" which appeared in the *Times* a few days after the declaration of war—and that really was a piece of "below-stairs" diplomacy if ever there was one!

However, to return to Pesio. When, on July 15, the fateful message board of the Certosa informed us that close on the Friday midnight, July 14–15, the Emperor of the French had declared war against the "North German Confederation," every one was sure that it was going to be a case of another "Seven Weeks War," as in 1866; and we ourselves, dwellers in Italy, were only thankful that this time the combatants were going to fight it out, in all probability, in their own respective neighbouring back gardens, instead of in ours as had happened in 1859.

The outbreak of this new war had come as a horrid surprise—as, somehow, war always does to the general public. All our sympathies were with the French, as were those of Italy at large. The cry "A Berlin!" found a confident echo in all our hearts. Of course the French were going to win—they were so sure of it themselves! They were nearer to us in every way than their opponents; they had many faults doubtless, but at least they were not Germans. We knew comparatively little about Prussia in those days; in spite of 1866, enlightenment was all to come; it was enough in Italy to be German to be classed with the hated "Tedeschi," who had only recently been evicted from our borders.

Love and hate are really questions of geography. The Austrians in Italy were the bogey of my childhood; I was a very young woman still when the Austrian in Vienna was a brother and a friend, so Latin in some ways that I used to forget that he was born on the wrong side of the Alps. The North German, as I discovered later, is a fearsome creature, a moral "cave man" who was never meant to mingle with fellow-beings of more elastic build. The terror of him—for till the history of the war was written the outside world recked little of the Bavarians and the Saxons and all the others who helped him to win his victories—closed down upon us like a doom. On the 15th of July we laughed pityingly at his folly in pitting himself against the gallant born fighters of France; and at first, indeed, it seemed as though we were right in our prophecy of a French success when we learned that Saarbrück had been taken by our friends. This brief gleam of fortune, however, lasted only until Monday morning, August 8, a wet,

dismal day, when, towards breakfast-time, the usual telegrams began to be posted up on the board. What was this that met our eyes? There, staring us in the face, was the fact of the battles on Saturday afternoon, as well as of that on Thursday at Weissenburg, with their terrific "guess-work" estimates of casualties. We could hardly realize that Abel Douay, whose victorious troops had marched back from Mentana that bright November day, scarcely three years before, had been killed, and that those same troops had been put to flight—it was like a bad dream! And yet what was Weissenburg compared to the Saturday battles at Wörth and Spicheren, when the flower of the French army under MacMahon, the demi-god of Magenta, and Frossard, of whom so much had been expected, had been crushed and beaten? But worse was still to come.

After that very "black Monday" for us at Pesio there came a lull of a week or so, while the Germans were marching on across the Vosges and concentrating towards Metz. In the meantime signs were not wanting, even at the Certosa, of the changes wrought by the course of events; the national restlessness, if one may call it, among the Northern Italians with whom we were in daily contact, was becoming more and more marked, until, with the news of the French evacuation of Rome on August 18, it found expression in open discussion as to the expediency of taking advantage of the European situation to occupy the Eternal City. At first we could hardly believe our ears when we heard them talk of an Italian expedition into the Papal States; it seemed to us incredible in view of the solemn promise given by Victor Emmanuel to Napoleon III. in 1864 that he would not molest the Pope in the possession

of Rome. But we little knew what was in store either for Pius IX. or his capital; indeed, the Italian Government was, as yet, uncertain of its own policy, and was waiting to be guided by circumstances.

All the same we felt instinctively that a new era was setting in, and that a great new force, that of a united Germany, had come into being; but the parting with old ideals, notably that of French military prowess, was none the easier on that account. Perhaps, though, the very suddenness of the German victories, by stunning one, rather took away from the pain of the shock itself.

With the news of the French evacuation of Rome there reached us that of the dire fighting about Metz, towards which fortress Bazaine suffered himself first to be tempted, and then to be finally hemmed in beyond hope of escape. It is with the great battle of the Thursday of that tremendous week—August 18—that my recollections have since become particularly linked; my association with it is, strange to say, with the German side.

My future brother-in-law, Erich von Rabe, was among the few Prussian officers who preserved a lasting enmity towards their opponents of Bazaine's army on that memorable 18th of August. He always felt, and one can hardly blame him, that he had not been given fair play by the enemy who shot him from behind an ambush, in the evening, after the battle was over and Saint Privat de Montaigne had been taken by the Saxons and Hessians. Erich, who was not at the time with his regiment, the Fusiliers of the Guard, but was passing with only a few men of his company by the long grassy slopes where the Guards had lost so heavily earlier in the day, was struck by a bullet in the leg, and so badly

injured as to be obliged to leave the Service—a misfortune to which he could never afterwards refer without expressing a wish to meet his unseen assailant but once that he might repay him in full. The old Chassepot balls were very punishing things, and in Erich's case they sustained their reputation for the frequent infliction of complicated and life-long suffering. For the rest of his life he was very rarely out of pain, and was compelled to wear a horrible steel frame about the wounded limb to support the torn sinews and muscles. One would have said that amputation were preferable, but then it is always so easy to prescribe where one's own limbs are not in question.

Had Gravelotte been fought with modern weapons my dear brother-in-law might have lived to a good old age: as it was, he died, worn out with sufferings most heroically borne, twelve years after his disaster, leaving my poor sister a widow with two children so young that they could hardly remember their father at all. It is strange to reflect that the immense strides since made in perfecting weapons intended for deadly slaughter have been the means of saving many thousands of valuable lives. In that department they do things much better nowadays than in 1870.

CHAPTER XXI

1870 AND THE TAKING OF ROME

A sad fortnight—"Rome doomed!"—The fall of Sedan—Hypocrisy of Victor Emmanuel—Resolute attitude of Pius IX.—His defenders prepare for death—The Holy Father's address to the Corps Diplomatique—Cadorna enters the Eternal City—How Florence received the news—The mob threatens to break into the Royal Palace—Apparition of Victor Emmanuel on the balcony—News from Rome—"The devil is let loose!"—A sad home-coming—The Tiber protests—The lodgers at the Quirinal—Noble offer made by Queen Victoria to the Holy Father—His respect and affection for her and her country.

THE last fortnight of August 1870 was one of the saddest periods of my early life. It was impossible any longer to doubt the intentions of the Italian Government. The people of the North saw that long-coveted prize, Rome, within their grasp, and although Victor Emmanuel still pretended to cling to his given promise, it was well understood that his much-published reluctance would disappear at the first opportune moment. Even should Napoleon III. succeed in extricating himself from Sedan, as was hoped, and in remaining on the throne, all his energies would have to be directed towards repairing his recent disasters, and it would be impossible for him to protect the Holy Father and his possessions. We received the Roman daily papers, and each day made it more clear that the deepest gloom and depression

reigned in the Vatican circle and the city at large. For us the situation was rendered still more poignant by the fact that among the Zouaves, now the Pope's only defenders, were friends most near and dear, who had come and gone at Palazzo Odescalchi like sons of the house. Resistance of a stubborn kind would be offered to the invaders, and the men who had fought so well at Mentana would be in the thickest of the fight. Should we ever see them again? or would their names be added to the long list of those who had fallen then?

My mother and I felt that in any case we could have stayed no longer among people who, however socially charming, were now our declared enemies, but we were also consumed with the desire to get back to Rome at all costs before the storm burst. So we, with the little children and our weeping maids (who were convinced that their families would be massacred by the "brutti buzzurri" [1]), rushed down to Florence, hoping to find the way still open for the remaining short journey home. We arrived there towards the end of August, to find that all further progress was impossible. The Government had already taken possession of the lines, and the country was in such an uproar that, even had this not been the case, we were warned that it would be unwise for a party of unprotected women and children to attempt to travel through it.

So, sorely against our will, in Florence we had to stay, each hour bringing worse tidings. It was in Florence that we got the news of the fall of Sedan and the surrender of Napoleon III. with his enormous army

[1] A derisive nickname bestowed by the Romans on the Northern Italians on account of their discordant speech.

of 83,000 men.[1] Then Florence went mad and there was one cry in every mouth: "Roma! Roma!" At once the movement of troops began. The populace yelled and cheered as the men marched by—the same populace which a few months later bewailed the abandonment of Florence and the substitution of Rome for the capital as the most cruel blow to its prosperity. The King was invisible. He was supposed to be battling with his ministers for the saving of his honour, while Pius IX. was reading his lying letters and indignantly refusing to accept his terms. Victor Emmanuel was both stupid and weak, but either he or some one in his close vicinity had a fine sense of dramatic fitness. The farce was really quite well played.

On September 13 the word was given to General Cadorna, the Italian Commander-in-Chief, to cross over into the Papal States with his army of seventy thousand men; be it remembered that only the same day did Pius IX. despatch an answer by Ponza di San Martino to a letter of Victor Emmanuel in which the King excused himself for what he was about to do, not merely on the grounds of national peace and good order, but because, as he put it, the Holy Father was not safe among his own "rebellious subjects," whose legitimate desire for another King to rule over them might precipitate disaster at any moment! Not content with this calumny on the Romans, who, though supine and cowardly, literally adored Pius IX., he had the effrontery

[1] Nature herself gave voice to a note of exclamation that day. A frightful storm broke over Windsor, and the lightning struck a tree which Napoleon III. had planted in the Park, when he and the Empress Eugénie were visiting the Queen in 1855. Half the tree remained standing till June 1, 1879, the day of the Prince Imperial's death in Zululand, when a similar storm swept over the Castle and another stroke of lightning completed the destruction of the tree.

to ask for the Apostolic Benediction on himself. In the interview with Ponza the aged Pontiff for once in his life expressed himself in terms of outspoken indignation, and Ponza made his escape as quickly as he could from the presence of the outraged Pope.

Of the events in Rome from the morning of the 16th of September, when the city awoke from sleep to find an enemy encamped outside its walls, on Monte Mario, to that of the 20th when the end came, we learned in scraps from the personal accounts of one friend and another who had remained in attendance on the Pope.

Cadorna waited for some days, during which he made various offers to Kanzler; he even went to the length of suggesting that, if only his soldiers might be allowed to enter Rome unopposed, he would be willing to promise that they should do so with cries of "Long live Pius IX." The answer was that the Pope had no intention of letting the Italians enter Rome without its having been made amply evident to the world that they had only done so by force. Therefore, I suppose, Cadorna telegraphed back to Victor Emmanuel to ask leave to attack the city without further delay, and it was then that we in Florence knew of what was to take place the next day.

In the meantime, in Rome itself every preparation was being made in view of the morrow. The besiegers numbered seventy thousand, the defenders twelve thousand; and of these twelve thousand every man expected that the next day would be his last, for they had no knowledge of the Pope's secret decision to make only a formal defence and avoid the awful bloodshed which would have been the result of prolonging the hopeless struggle. All that night through, the priests sat in the

confessionals in all the churches, and the devout Zouaves knelt in crowds around them—crowds that thinned out as the night wore on, and melted away at dawn when every man, shriven, blessed, and ready to meet his Maker, went to take his place on parade.

I think it was from the brothers Girolamo and Maurizio Cavalletti that we had the details of Pius IX.'s attitude during those two days. Late on the afternoon of the 19th he had himself driven across the city to its highest point, where, close to the Lateran gate, stands the Sanctuary of the "Scala Santa," the Holy Stair, brought from Jerusalem in the time of the Crusades, the stair by which the Redeemer entered and left the palace of Pilate on the day of the Crucifixion. The marble steps are covered with wood in which thick glass is inserted at intervals to permit the faithful to behold the stains of the Precious Blood shed for them. No one may ascend this Via Dolorosa on foot; from step to step the devout go up on their knees, descending again by ordinary stairs at the side. Pius IX., despite his seventy-eight years, his feebleness, and the burning heat of that September afternoon, went up the twenty-eight steps on his knees, and when he reached the top, prostrated himself, touched his forehead to the ground, and prayed as perhaps even he had never prayed before. One of those nearest to him afterwards wrote down what he could remember of that heart-broken supplication for the preservation of the Holy City from the impious marauders camped outside her gates, that immemorial "O Gran Dio, Signore e Sovrano mio," which echoed so long and so poignantly in the ears of those who heard it. "Oh, Great God," it runs, "my Lord and my Sovereign, behold me, your unworthy representative, here in the midst of my enemies, come to

supplicate your Divine Help!" Then Pio Nono went on to pray that, if a sacrifice were required by Heaven, his own life might be accepted instead of the loss of Rome and the Romans. He reminded the Almighty of all the hatred with which his enemies had pursued him, of his great age, of his bodily ills, and entreated that his sufferings might be substituted for the threatened sacrilege. He offered up the Sufferings and Passion of Him Who had trodden the Scala Santa more than eighteen hundred years before to die for sinners, offered too the merits of the holy Martyrs whose blood had sunk into Rome as sacred soil. His own life, he said, was nothing, but Rome was everything. "Spare—spare Rome from the hands of the invaders!" was his one prayer.

Then he ceased and was still for some time, as though waiting for some interior intimation of the designs of Providence. Presently he tottered to his feet, saying as he did so, "After all, the will of God is best. May it alone be done!" At one time during his prayer he had been shaken with great sobs of sorrow, but now he was quite calm and resigned. Followed by the Guardia Nobile, the proudly devoted corps of which every member is a Roman nobleman, he was driven back in the gathering twilight along the Via San Giovanni, and past the ruins of the Coliseum (preserved for after-generations by his timely munificence in the early years of his pontificate) towards the Vatican. He seemed almost unconscious of the passionate affection with which he was greeted at almost every yard of the way; too broken down with the strain of those hours to lean forward as usual and bless the crowds who knelt as he passed. There is no episode in history which has been so wilfully misrepresented as this spoliation of the See of Peter. So-called historians have perjured themselves for

forty years in the effort to persuade the world that the Romans desired the change. The real Romans loved their good Pope, and hated the Piedmontese almost, if not quite, as much as they do to-day. As regards the plébiscite which was afterwards engineered in order to give some colouring of popular approval to the robbery —well, when one remembers other occasions when this method was resorted to, notably that following the annexation of Nice and Savoy by Napoleon III. in 1860 —*Verbum sapienti satiat!*

On reaching the Vatican the Pope withdrew to his own apartments, requesting that no one should disturb him that evening, but that he should be told at once as soon as the first shot had been fired in the morning. At a few minutes after five the next day, September 20, the cannonade began, and spread rapidly from point to point. Here it may be said at once that Cadorna showed himself in a far less unamiable light than some of his divisional leaders. For his own part he was instructed—as had been Oudinot in 1849—to do as little damage as possible, and not to injure any of the churches and monuments, or the Vatican itself; and, so far as I know, he took some trouble to spare them. In this his conduct compares advantageously with that of Bixio, who, enraged at having been assigned the unimportant post at Porta San Pancrazio instead of the one at Porta Pia where the real attack was to be made, vented his hatred by a wanton bombardment of the city *after its surrender.*

The Pope, when, in accordance with his orders, his valet called him, was found already fully dressed and in readiness for the day. From the bedroom he walked to his private oratory, recited part of his breviary, and made his morning meditation. That finished, he rose,

went to the window, where he stood for a while in profound melancholy, looking out towards Porta Pia, above which the smoke of battle was beginning to curl up thickly.

He did not speak at all, but presently sighed deeply, and came away from the window; then he began to vest for Mass. During the Mass that followed, even his splendid, resonant voice was drowned from time to time in the roar of cannon. When his Mass was said he heard another in thanksgiving, before praying alone for a while in supplication for the cause of the Church. He refused to touch a morsel of breakfast, but went direct from the chapel to the vast "Sala Reggia," where the Corps Diplomatique was waiting to be received by him on this momentous occasion. The position of most of its members was, to say the least of it, invidious in the extreme, for not a single Catholic Power had offered to strike a blow in defence of the Vicar of Christ. No one spoke until the Pontiff, after seating himself on the throne, blessed the assembled representatives, and proceeded to lay before them the situation as it stood. First he thanked them for their attendance, and then went on to say that he had written to Victor Emmanuel, but did not know whether the letter had yet reached the King, adding that, in any case, he had no hope of touching the monarch's conscience. He referred, too, to Nino Bixio, and to the latter's threat to throw him into the Tiber. "In an hour or two," said Pius IX., "he may fulfil his promise. Were it not for the sin he would bring on his unhappy soul, I would make no effort to prevent him from doing so —may God forgive him!" He spoke of the request proffered the day before by the seminarists of the North

American College that they might be allowed to arm themselves in defence of the Holy Father; an offer he had gratefully declined, telling them instead to turn their attention to the wounded. And then came the most pathetic part of his address, as he spoke of the decline of the temporal power of the Papacy.

"Yesterday," he told them, "along the way to the Scala Santa, I noticed the flags of the various nationalities fluttering over their respective establishments throughout the city. I realized with pain that the colours were hung out by all those people in order to protect their property and their lives from the invaders, and to compel from these that respect and immunity from molestation which my poor flag is no longer able to ensure for them.

"Would that I could say that I rely upon you, gentlemen, and upon the Powers you have the honour to represent, for deliverance from my difficulties, and for the restoration of the Church, as was the case in 1848! But times are changed—the poor old Pope has now no friend on earth upon whom he can rely. Relief must come from Heaven. Nevertheless, gentlemen, remember that the Catholic Church is immortal."

As he said this the news that a breach had been made at Porta Pia by Cadorna was brought to him. The enemy's attempt, however, to carry the breach had been thrown back with considerable losses by the Zouaves at that point, and a second attack was in preparation.

"It is enough," he said. "Let there be no more bloodshed." And immediately messengers were despatched to forbid further fighting, and to command the Zouaves to leave the gates and concentrate in the Piazza

of St. Peter's. The order seems to have been understood as an intimation that Bixio had entered the city and was breaking into the Vatican, and the Zouaves at Porta Pia (the whole of Rome stretches between the two points) raced as men never raced before to protect the Holy Father. But when they reached St. Peter's the order to lay down their arms and wait for events would have been disregarded had it come from any lips but those of the Sovereign Pontiff. Obedient to his command that not another blow should be struck to further embitter the invaders against the inhabitants of the town, they drew up as on parade in the great Piazza, and stood there mute and motionless as statues for many hours, while the reptile rabble of Garibaldians and revolutionaries, who had not dared to show their faces to the populace for weeks past, came out of their hiding-places, and insulted them with taunts and hootings and obscene curses—a martyrdom which Heaven will surely not forget when it makes up the accounts for those gallant sons of the Church.

No news from Rome had reached us for some days, when on the night of the 19th it became generally known that the attack on the city would take place the next morning, led by two of the worst men in Italy, Cadorna, the apostate friar, and Bixio, the one time henchman of Garibaldi, the Bixio who had said that if he could lay hands on the Pope he would throw him into the Tiber! Those hours of waiting for certain bad news were unspeakably wretched for us, but when, on the 20th, towards midday, the telegrams came pouring in and the air became one roar of triumph, we felt as if our hearts would break. The impossible had happened. It seemed as if the gates of hell had prevailed

after all, and the blow, though long expected, stunned us at first like some reversal of Nature's plainest law.

Then came the acute anxiety about our friends—about one who, had fate been kind, was to have been more than friend, and of whom, even at this distance of time, I cannot think without evoking the dearest memories of my youth. My mother's sympathies were all with me, and she consented—gallant woman that she always was—to face the yelling crowds with me, and try to get off a telegram to inquire as to his safety. So we two left the house—that depressing Casa Guidi of Mrs. Browning where some irony of circumstance had imprisoned us—and we set out, to be instantly swallowed up and carried off by a huge mob, surging like a tidal wave towards the Royal Palace.

"Il Rè, il Rè!" they howled. "Vogliamo veder' il Rè!" From every part of the city they came, pouring into the Piazza before the palace and filling all approaches to it. We were too unhappy to be frightened, but we were furious at finding ourselves swept in with this horde of hostile maniacs, who would, I verily think, have torn us to pieces had they known that we were loyal Romans. On and on we were borne, clinging desperately to one another, till we were close under the central balcony of Palazzo Pitti. There every window was closed. There was not a sign of life. The King was keeping up the farce to the very last. The noble, upright son of the Church had been "forced" into a situation which he had prepared for years. No, he would not come out and receive the cheers of his faithful Florentines, his subjects of eleven years' standing!

The subjects were getting angry; the cries became hisses; there were signs of a rush on the doors. Mamma and I were caught in it, and thought our last

moment had come. Then the shutters on that central balcony were flung open, a purple-faced man with enormous moustaches was pushed out, stood for an instant glaring down furiously while the mob yelled its delight, and disappeared again, closing the shutters with his own royal hand. The "evvivas" died away in menacing growls, the crowd thinned out, and as we at last found ourselves free to move the same thought came to us both: "Thank God I am not in that man's place to-night! He looked like a soul in hell!"

Two days passed before we could get a telegram through to Rome, and meanwhile the most contradictory accounts were published of the events of the 20th. "There had been bloody fighting"—"there had been no fighting at all"—"not more than a couple of shots were fired"—"a great number of buildings had been destroyed," etc., etc. Then we got a distracted letter from our old housekeeper, Lucia, from which we gathered that something very serious had happened at the Odescalchi. She had just escaped being killed, something was in ruins, the devil was certainly let loose, and would the Signora please come home directly as she was very ill from the shock and could carry her responsibilities no longer. Other people telegraphed to try and reassure us: "Considerable damage Odescalchi but no one hurt. Good thing you were not here."

When, ten days later, we were allowed to get home, a strange sight met our eyes. One of Bixio's shells from outside the Porta San Pancrazio had exploded in our library. Bixio had revenged himself for the slight put upon him, by firing into the city at random. One of his missiles flew in at our window just as poor old Lucia, having passed through her room, her cat at her heels,

was closing the door behind her. Bixio's little messenger landed on a heavy old oak table and burst there, scattering fragments of itself in every direction. Large pieces of it were embedded in the oak, and smaller ones in the backs of books, in the bookcases, and all over the room. A collection of beautiful Etruscan vases was completely shattered, of course, and but one breakable thing in the apartment had escaped destruction, the glass over the face of the clock! The clock had no face any more; that was reduced to a pile of fine white powder, but the glass behind which it lay was not even cracked.

A weight of intense depression was upon the city, accentuated by such a flood as had not been seen for many years. The Tiber rose in its wrath and turned all the lower portion of the town into a turgid yellow sea. As if to defend the approaches to the Vatican, it tore down bridges and submerged the "Prati," the open district round St. Peter's, to a depth of several feet. The vast round Piazza del Popolo, with its central obelisk and splendid architectural encircling, looked like one of the artificial lakes where the Roman Emperors used to watch sham naval battles. No sound was to be heard but the lapping of the water, the beat of the oars as the great flat-bottomed boats plied on their task of provisioning the city, and—hateful reminder of our changed state—shrill new bugle calls from improvised barracks, and echoes of strident military bands blown down from the direction of the Quirinal and the Pincio, where the officers in command were trying to keep up the spirits of their scared troops.

I caught no glimpse of them for many days; even had the flood not made the streets impassable, the general disquiet, the presence of the hostile army, the unwilling-

ness to actually see the sad changes around us, would have kept us at home. There we were utterly alone, for all our friends were "lying low" like ourselves. At last one morning our faithful coachman came upstairs to say that he was sure it would do the ladies good to have a drive. He would guarantee to take us by safe ways, and bring us back without accident, if we would trust ourselves to him. So a little later we crept down our damp stairs to issue forth in a closed carriage for our first airing. Having lured us out, Alessandro took care that we should at least see the sights. The Piazza del Popolo was still under water; but he skirted round and reached the gate of Villa Borghese at last, assisted, I verily believe, by the horses, who were so accustomed to being driven there that they would have found the way by themselves. The villa had been turned into one vast camp. Tents, stacked rifles, cooking-stoves, and slovenly-looking soldiers were everywhere, from the reproduction of Napoleon's tomb in St. Helena, near the entrance, to the gates of the Casino, and on to the dark, forbidding Palazzo Cenci on the confines of the Park—the building where never a door or window has been seen opened since its confiscation after the Cenci tragedy, four hundred years ago, centuries during which the descendants of the victims have never failed to put in their claims to this property once in each decade. There was something grimly triumphant in the aspect of the old palace; it seemed to say "Spoliation has come on the spoilers at last."

One thing that struck me very forcibly was the frightened expression on the faces of the troops. The officers had retained some of their swagger, but the men, good Catholics from decent parishes all over the North,

hated the job, and expected condign punishment from Heaven for the sacrilege they had been forced to commit. We were sorry for the poor fellows, whom no true Roman passed without a murmured curse, and whose only friends were to be found among the hitherto least respected classes. These rejoiced blatantly; the socialist, the revolutionist, the atheist, the men who had been shunned by all decent people, could make their voices heard, could insult the priest on his way to administer the last Sacraments, could publish their scurrilous papers, and call the Holy Father by villainous names with all impunity now. When Porta Pia was battered down a tide of prostitutes flowed in on the city; disorderly houses sprang up like weeds in the night; indecent pictures and obscene literature were flaunted in the streets. Vice raised its head joyfully, for "liberty of conscience" had prevailed at last, and the authorized sign-posts were all set up on the road to hell.

One of the saddest minor results of the change was the breaking up of families. When the Court found courage to move down to Rome for the season, the younger members of the great old families, accustomed to be the leaders of society, could not bring themselves to forgo their usual prominence. While Prince Doria, and Prince Colonna, and other heads of houses, remained staunchly faithful to the Holy Father, their sons threw in their lot with the new-comers—and incidentally found themselves in contact with people whom their traditions had taught them to despise, and whose society must have proved exceedingly trying at first. But they were willing to put up with anything except the dullness of enforced retirement, loyally accepted by hundreds of others. Romans were amused to find that

such delightful society butterflies as Giannetto and Alfonso Doria, Marcantonio and Fabrizio Colonna, had suddenly become inspired with progressive Liberal principles, strong enough to make them disregard parental authority, and openly insult this by at once accepting places at Court. With what transports the Court received them it is unnecessary to describe. Their names were a godsend to the poor lodgers at the Quirinal, who, in order to fill their reception rooms at all, were obliged to receive all and sundry who asked for admittance there. It must have gone sorely against the grain for Princess Margaret, the proudest and most refined of women, to have to shake hands with and smile upon the mob that besieged her doors. She had all the onus of the situation to carry; it was she who conferred on the new régime whatever stability it came to possess; she never spared herself, and her work was terribly hard, for the King made not the slightest attempt to conciliate popularity, and Prince Humbert in those days was a mere shadow—a lay figure in uniform—not morose like his father, but silent, shy, and patently disgusted at having been thrust into the falsest of all false situations. Both he and Princess Margaret had all our sympathy, but I could almost have turned anarchist the first time I met Victor Emmanuel driving down from the Quirinal to show himself in the Corso and on the Pincio. My last vision of him on the balcony of his palace in Florence had been frightful enough, but there was something more sinister in his face now, that expression of angry yet mortal fear by which we were to remember him for all time. The tragedy of a soul was written there. His terror of Heaven's vengeance was so great that never once would he sleep

under the roof of the Quirinal, the Pope's own palace, where he was supposed to lodge. Every night at bed-time he crept out across the way to the Palazzo della Consulta, a building where all kinds of Papal business had been transacted, slept there, and went back at break of day to his official residence on the other side of the street—where, in spite of his precautions, death, and the Pope's forgiveness, found him at the last.

And beside this greater fear was ever and always the lesser one, the expectation of some revolutionary outbreak which would cause the downfall of his dynasty and bring on a bloody civil war in Italy. As has already been said, a plébiscite had somehow been obtained in Rome, but neither the King nor any one else was deceived into believing that it attested the feelings of the majority of responsible Romans. But it is hard to justify the Romans. They behaved very badly on this occasion, relapsing into sulky silence and refusing to record votes, which, however numerous, would always have been outnumbered by the majority cooked up by the schemers who had been steadily planting thousands upon thousands of aliens in the city ever since 1849, and who would have considered no methods too nefarious if useful to them. After all, character tells, and the Romans, we must admit, are a superficial, indolent people, very poor upholders of any cause ; in the face of the great armed force everywhere to the fore, they may, perhaps, be excused for realizing that the voting was a mere farce, never intended to deceive any one. The results had been decided at Turin before Cavour's death, and ratified in Florence when the Prussians entered Sedan. Why fight against the inevitable ?

In all this heart-breaking story of betrayal and for-

saking there is one fact, known only to the privileged few, which stands out brilliantly in contrast with the surrounding darkness. The great Queen of Protestant England added one more glory to those which will crown her name for all time. To her everlasting honour she offered Pius IX. her island of Malta, not only as a refuge from his persecutors, but as a permanent home and an impregnable seat of spiritual Government whence he could rule Catholic Christendom in honour and safety. The Pope was touched to the heart; he had the most profound respect for her as a ruler, and ever since her marriage, when he represented Gregory XVI. and conveyed to her the Pontiff's congratulations and good wishes, a personal friendship had subsisted between them. He had prayed for her all his life, and for her subjects in "dear England," the country which, as he often said, God had blessed with an especial prosperity because of its great faithfulness in observing the Lord's Day. He declined the Queen's offer—he could not abandon his post at the Tomb of the Apostles—but to his dying day he prayed ever more fervently for her and her people, instituting that practice of offering up every night, in the Vatican, a special prayer for England, which has been continued by his successors and to which we surely owe a great part of the marvellous renascence of Catholicism which the country beholds to-day.

CHAPTER XXII

NEW CONDITIONS IN THE ETERNAL CITY

Opening of the Chambers—Princess Margaret—Her charm and popularity—A Royal baby—The Prince of Naples—His faithful affection for his governess—A mediaeval tourney and its gallant young leader—A dark tragedy—The Prince relates a ghostly experience of his own—Difficulty of obtaining evidence against criminals—A noble Marquis murders his stepson—"We kept silence like wise men"—Roman Villas—Augustus Hare—An enchanting journey—The lost Etruscan sepulchres—Mr. Hare's ghost stories—His kindness to my brother—My friendship with Madame Ristori—The triumph of her humble début.

IN November 1871 the Italian Parliament was opened, and I saw Princess Margaret for the first time. I had long possessed a photograph of her taken when she was a little girl in short frocks, with her hair in plaits as thick as bell-ropes and hanging nearly to her knees. She had sent it to Miss Yonge (Aunt Elizabeth Sewell's friend) with a gracious little letter of thanks for the great pleasure she had had in reading her books, for the Princess Margaret was an avid reader from her earliest years. She was the daughter of Prince Ferdinand of Savoy, Duke of Genoa (the brother of Victor Emmanuel), and of Elizabeth, the daughter of the King of Saxony. Married at sixteen to her cousin, Prince Humbert, she was, when she came to Rome, just nineteen, the proud mother of a splendid year-old boy and

the chief support and hope of the new order of things in the South. Naples had been flattered into good humour by the birth of the little Prince within its walls and the title of "Prince of Naples" bestowed upon him; now a more arduous task than the conciliation of the easy-going Neapolitans was laid on the slender, lovely girl whom the most stubborn political opponents of her family could not but regard with respect and admiration —the task of winning popularity for her morose father-in-law and her indolent, pleasure-loving husband.

Beauty and youth go a long way towards working miracles when they are combined with sweetness, intelligence, and a high order of courage. The Princess began by smiling at everybody and entirely refusing to discriminate between friends and foes. Every day she drove out, the flaring scarlet of the Royal liveries acting as a beacon to the eye of the public, and sadly discounting the delicate pink which was, I remember, her favourite colour in bonnets at that time. Even that trying background of red, however, could not dull the radiance of a complexion which had not a touch of colour itself, but which in its dazzling whiteness and transparency seemed to give out light. Her hair, of a pure, deep gold, her grey eyes, her winning smile, all made up a picture which, once seen, it was impossible to forget. She was always accompanied by the Marchesa di Villa Marina, whose dark colouring made a fine contrast to her Saxon fairness, and by Don Marcantonio Colonna, her "gentil'uomo d'onore," dark too, with all the traditional good looks of his exceedingly handsome race. It was his sister, Vittoria Colonna, whom my brother described so faithfully in Corona, the heroine of "Saracinesca."

There was another equipage which daily attracted amused attention during that season, the one containing the little Prince of Naples and his attendants. This little man, sitting on his English governess's knee, met the world with a stare of quite Royal defiance. Fair like his mother, his dimpled countenance yet recalled the features of Victor Emmanuel with almost ludicrous fidelity, and his aggressive expression seemed to say, "Just wait a few years and I will show you moustaches as fine as Grandpapa's!"—a promise which has since been successfully fulfilled. His pretty mother had very definite ideas as to his education. His physical training was to be thoroughly English, and on this point she permitted no one to interfere with the methods of the wise and devoted woman to whom it had been confided from the moment of his birth. There was too much cold water and fresh air about it for Italian ideas, and alarmed members of the household used to rush to Princess Margaret crying out that Mrs. Bruce (I think that was the lady's name) would certainly kill his Royal Highness by her Spartan treatment. But the Princess, who had been brought up on the same lines, laughed at their fears; and certainly the results supported the value of British hygiene, for although Victor Emmanuel III., as he was destined to become, never attained any greater height than his grandfather—a distinctly short man—he enjoyed perfect health until he grew up, and (what generally goes with that blessing) a delightfully happy, genial disposition. He loved his English governess dearly, and long after he passed from her gentle sway to that of tutors and military instructors went to see her constantly in her bright little home in Rome, and, through all those years of ever-increasing strenuousness of occupation,

never once failed to send her a daily note enclosing—the menu of his dinner! The quaint habit had its origin in some boyish joke, but the constancy and affection shown by its uninterrupted continuance testify to an unusually loving and faithful heart.

The first and most cherished idol of this was his mother, as indeed she deserved to be. I remember assisting at a very pretty sight, a kind of mediæval tournament given in Villa Borghese to celebrate the marriage of the Duke of Genoa. The Prince of Naples was then about fourteen years old, and was the chief figure in many of the difficult equestrian manœuvres executed to the plaudits of enormous crowds of onlookers. Dressed in a fifteenth-century costume of white satin stiff with gold, a feathered, jewelled cap on his fair hair, and sitting his beautiful horse like a young centaur, he looked as if he had just leapt down from one of Paul Veronese's gorgeous Venetian paintings—a picture to remember all one's life. With admirable dexterity and self-possession he led his splendid posse of knights, all fine-looking young men bearing the historic costumes of the noblest families of Italy, round that wonderful green sweep of the vast Borghese amphitheatre. Never had pageant lovelier setting than that. The white marble tiers rise row on row from the velvet sward, to end in their encircling crown of stone, pine, and ilex. The central space was all awave with grasses and wild anemones that day, and the sun shone, and the bands played, and the people, gentle and simple alike, shouted for joy at the beauty of it all, for time had healed many wounds, and Queen Margaret and King Humbert had done much to earn forgiveness for Victor Emmanuel.

But the young Victor Emmanuel seemed to care

nothing at all for the cheers of the huge crowd; he had eyes only for one approving smile—his mother's. After each evolution he reined up his horse below where she sat in the Royal tribune and looked up at her, his eyes asking the question, "Was that all right?" and when she smiled and nodded he would prance away again with his gorgeous train, perfectly happy because "Mamma" was pleased.

A good many years later, but before he came to the throne, he was yachting round the Naples coast, and having cast up at Villa Crawford, presented Marion with the usual Royal souvenir, a photograph of himself. When I saw it I exclaimed: "But this was taken when he was a boy! It is the costume he wore at the tourney in 1882!"

"Yes," was my brother's reply; "the Prince said, 'I am going to give you my portrait, Mr. Crawford, but you see I am not proud of my legs, so you must take the likeness of my horse too.'"

There was something in the atmosphere of the Villa Crawford which always made people wish to tell of the most interesting things that had ever happened to them. Sitting out on the great terrace after dinner, listening to the waves lapping against the rocks a sheer three hundred feet below, watching the moonlight fling its silver witchery over that magic sea, while distant Naples showed like a chaplet of wet pearls on the curve of the bay, and Vesuvius threw out its angry glow and an occasional tongue of flame, confidences that would have shunned the light of day were murmured over the coffee and cigarettes. The "Principino," as he was still called, began by railing at the adverse fate which condemned him to pass so much of his time in Naples.

"Is it not too absurd," he exclaimed, "that I, who detest Naples and love Turin, am the Prince of Naples and have got to live in Naples, while my cousin, who adores the place and hates Turin, is the Count of Turin and is condemned to live *there*?"

"And what is the matter with Naples that you dislike it so much, Monseigneur?"

"Oh, I don't know; it is not my atmosphere, I suppose. I belong in the North, and I cannot take to Southern ways. Besides, I had a very distressing experience in Naples. I got a shocking fright there! Yes, a real fright —and that is an emotion which I shall never forget."

This was too promising an opening to neglect, and after a little persuasion the Prince related the following story, of which all the incidents except those concerning himself were more or less known to my brother, for they centred round a tragedy which had attained the unenviable fame of a "cause célèbre."

The heroine and victim of it was a certain Princess M——, a young girl of great wealth and beauty, and, unhappily for her, an orphan, living under the guardianship of her uncle and aunt, who, until she should marry or come of age, were to administer her fortune for her. As the time approached for one or both of these events to take place, the passion of avarice excited in her guardians by her great possessions became so overwhelming that they felt they could never part with their use of them. They did not apparently arrive at murder point all at once; they compromised by marrying her to a young man of their own choice, who, it was understood, was not to interfere with their administration of the estates. But either he turned restive when he was in a position to do so, or (as seems most likely) their

increasing cupidity could no longer brook any bar to absolute and complete possession. During her short married life, which was not a happy one, the Prince of Naples formed a strong friendship for the rather friendless girl, and the news of her alarmingly sudden death, reaching him during his own absence from the town, was a great shock to him. Those around him, anxious to spare his feelings, took care that he should not hear the circumstances of her end, which, there was no doubt, had been a violent one.

Having left her own house, perfectly well, to visit her uncle and aunt, she became mortally ill on her return home, and died a few hours later in fearful pain, and with every symptom of poisoning, black spots appearing on her skin and her face becoming horribly disfigured. The Southern horror of death hurried the poor child into her grave before any proper investigation had taken place, the hastily summoned physicians believing her death to be the result of an accident, and not wishing to wound her husband's feelings by insisting on an autopsy.

But when, on the reading of her will, it became known that she had left her entire fortune unconditionally to her well-beloved uncle and aunt, public indignation was aroused, and a trial ensued. But it was impossible to convict the offenders; there is nothing so difficult to obtain in the South as evidence—the fear of retaliation on the part of their families is too great. The widower appeared unwilling to implicate them, and it was thought that his silence was probably due to some nefarious pre-matrimonial arrangement of which the Princess's late guardians could produce the proof. The prosecution finally fell through, and the murderers—as they were

generally accounted to be—left in quiet possession of their blood-stained gains.

It was some two months after the Princess M——'s death that the Prince of Naples, from whom, as I have said, the more painful details of her end had somehow been kept, was returning to his quarters alone one night, his road taking him past Palazzo M——. "It was towards one o'clock in the morning," he said, "and a full moon was making the city light as day. I left my cab, as was my custom, at the bottom of the street, and went up on foot, on the side opposite Palazzo M——. I was not thinking of Princess M—— at that moment, being merely in haste to reach my quarters. As I passed the palace I noticed that a woman was standing on the central balcony (one storey above ground), leaning over and looking out towards Capri, her figure very clear in the moonlight against the closed shutters behind her. I did not glance at her a second time, but passed on, and it was not until I had gone some distance farther up the street that a question presented itself to my mind. Those shutters were tightly closed; the fastenings were all on the inside; how could that woman have got out on to the balcony? I resolved to go back and find out, for I was really puzzled. Retracing my steps I halted in the middle of the street directly before the balcony, and looked up. Then my blood froze in my veins, for standing there, gazing down at me, was my dead friend, with the most mournful expression I have ever seen on a human countenance. Her eyes were fixed on mine with entire recognition, and some sad appeal which her lips were not permitted to frame. Thus we stood confronting each other while some

minutes must have passed. I had time to convince myself that I had been right—that the window behind her was tightly closed from within. The unusually bright moonlight showed me every detail of her appearance. She was dressed in white; there were dark, livid-looking patches on her face and hands, and also on her dress. I particularly noticed her hands, for the moonlight played brilliantly on a large ruby ring which I had never seen her wear.

"Suddenly she disappeared and I was alone, staring at the empty balcony and the tightly closed shutters. We of the House of Savoy are not cowards, but in that moment I learnt what fear was; my knees were giving way under me, and it was all that I could do to reach my quarters on foot. May I never have such another experience!

"After that I insisted on learning all the particulars of Princess M——'s death. You know what they were. For some unexplained reason she had been buried wearing that ruby ring."

I alluded just now to the difficulty of obtaining evidence against criminals in Southern Italy. A curious instance of this occurred at Sorrento, a few years before the story just related. A certain Marchese N—— had married the only daughter of some wealthy people who held large estates in the "Penisola." The girl had accepted him unwillingly, for, while still very young, she had been cruelly wronged and had become the mother of an illegitimate child. She had made up her mind that she ought never to marry; she intended to devote herself entirely to her son, who, when the Marchese N—— asked her to become his wife, was a bright little fellow about eight years old.

The suitor was refused at first, but he persisted obstinately. The girl made her parents tell him her story, which, he declared, in no way diminished his respect or affection for her, and it was only on his solemnly promising that she should never be separated from her son that she finally consented to marry the Marchese.

All went well for a time, but either the man was jealous of the love his wife bestowed on the child, or else he feared that she might leave him too large a share of her property. Professing outwardly the liveliest affection for the boy and doing everything to win his confidence, the Marchese made up his mind to remove him from his path. He began by taking him out for long excursions in that lonely country, and every one was edified by his kindness to his nameless stepson.

One day they two were passing over the great viaduct which rises on a row of arches to carry the road across the deep valley which separates Vicovaro from the next village. The boy apparently had a fancy to walk on the parapet which borders the bridge on either side. His stepfather humoured him and held his hand as he ran along. The bridge was deserted and not a soul in sight. When they reached the spot over the deepest part of the valley, the Marchese deliberately pushed the boy over the edge—into space. He returned home a day or two later, and accounted to his wife for her son's absence by some tale of having left him among friends. But her suspicions were aroused, and, frantic with anxiety, she instituted a search which resulted in the finding of a poor little body, mangled beyond recognition, in the ravine below the viaduct. Every

name mark had been carefully picked out of the child's linen—a task requiring the greatest patience, for Italian women are magicians at elaborate sampler-stitching.

The precaution did not prevent the identification of the corpse, and the unfortunate mother at once preferred the charge of murder against her husband. But not a single witness against him could be found. Nobody would swear to having seen him with the boy that day at all, although they must have passed scores of peasants who knew them by sight. The Marchese at last admitted that his stepson had fallen off the bridge, and declared that he had not the heart to tell his wife the shocking news when he returned to her. The linen? What should he know about the linen? Probably the housekeeper was meaning to letter it anew.

So the Marchese got off, though everybody was convinced he was guilty. And I happen to know just what did occur on that fatal bridge, because two of my brother's sailors, from some point of vantage, watched the whole proceeding from beginning to end. They described it to me long afterwards, and when asked why they would not give evidence against the Marchese, Luigi, the autocrat of the crew, replied: "And why should we do such a silly thing as that? The Marchese's relations would not have gone to the galleys with him, would they? And, besides, who wants to get mixed up with the police? They would have had our names down in their books! No, no, we kept silence like wise men."

The events of 1870 inaugurated a new phase of life for me. I was naturally less enthusiastic about general society, which remained for a long time in an inchoate, uusatisfactory condition, and interests which had lain dormant for two or three years revived and

served to distract my thoughts from one or two sadly empty places in my surroundings. It was just before my twentieth birthday that, at a given moment out on the Campagna, the mists of excitability, mistaken romance, and youthful vanity were swept away in an instant, and the old love and trust of nature, the unfailing friend of my earlier years, reasserted its calm, beneficent sway. It may seem trivial to mention here what was a purely mental and personal experience, but these are sometimes the true arbiters of fate, and from that moment, in spite of many mistakes and distractions, I began to build up a little inner castle of the mind, which no assaults from without could reach. All my reading went to enrich it, and every beautiful thing I saw, small or great, was stored in its galleries. It taught me to choose my friends with more discrimination than heretofore, and it taught me respect for the real things of existence as distinguished from all the froth and glitter of the world, which, I am sorry to say, had a good deal carried me off my feet since my first introduction to it.

The real things were everywhere in Rome. My sister Annie and I insisted on being emancipated from the irksome company of a chaperon on our walks, and though the step cost us something of a battle, we were fully rewarded by the liberty thus gained. Dressed in the quietest of frocks, we used to start together to explore one unknown quarter after another, and our rambles resulted in some charming discoveries both within and without the city walls. One of them was the "lost" Villa Chigi, a place of fantastic loveliness a few miles to the north of Rome, side-tracked in the rolling Campagna, and deserted by its owners for so many years that no one had ever heard of it. An old contadino

lived there and grew his salad in some of the garden-beds ; otherwise the only living inhabitants were the nightingales, who had taken possession of the deep copses, the mysterious ilex avenues, the bits of feathery woodland that spilt over into the Campagna, and sang there as nightingales never sang anywhere else ! One of the features of Villa Chigi, which it shared with many other Renaissance villas, was a number of small meadow-like enclosures surrounded by high, almost impenetrable walls of box and ilex. The Quirinal Gardens and the Villa Medici are full of these little worlds of privacy, where the grass grows high and is all crested with wild-flowers shimmering and waving under every stray breeze that creeps through those mighty natural walls. One wonders with what purpose it was all laid out ; privacy and contemplation hardly entered into the spirit of the times ; for gay reunions or "precious" gatherings of fashionable poets and dainty philosophers the Italians always preferred the set, theatrical grandeur of marble terraces and pseudo-Greek amphitheatres. Still, "the true Romance" has reigned through every age, and kindly landscape gardeners even then, perhaps, considered the tastes of dreaming lovers under summer moons.

Villa Chigi and another exquisite retreat, Villa Potenziani, became constant resorts with us in the spring and summer, and the more favoured of our friends were introduced to them on condition that they would not tell the outside world of their existence. Augustus Hare was much with us in those days, and it was one of my great delights to sit beside him and watch a sketch of some beloved spot grow under his fingers. He was the quickest artist I ever knew, and all the time that he was painting he would pour forth floods of quaint, enter-

taining talk—stories without end, opinions often cranky and impossible, but always worth listening to, reminiscence, biography scandalous and otherwise, and autobiography without end. I had not imagined that one human creature could have made such a collection of experiences in what looked the dullest and most limited of lives. He lived with his mother, a nervous invalid, subject to incredible "other-world" visitations of death-like trance, second sight, and other eerie privileges, in a poky little apartment in the Babuino, and, until he discovered his talents as a learned cicerone and as an author, Mr. Hare maintained her almost entirely by his art, which, though he was only a water-colourist, was of a very high order. I never saw Mrs. Hare; she did not receive visitors; but her son had inherited enough of her strange powers to make me rather glad not to know his mysterious parent.

There are a few people in the world whose characters present irreconcilable incongruities which yet in no way diminish the love and respect they inspire. Mr. Hare was one of these. Incongruity was, in his case, the spiteful fairy who, if legends speak true, hobbles in after the christening to bestow on the poor infant some absurd or inconvenient quality which, she hopes, will neutralize all the gracious gifts of his chosen sponsors. Yet all she accomplished for Augustus Hare was to add a touch of pity to the affection with which every one of his friends regarded him. Intended to be tall, with big, aquiline features and broad shoulders, his growth had stopped several inches short of anything that could lend dignity to his appearance; a most fluent and enchanting talker, his voice was shrill and squeaky; proud and painfully sensitive, his circumstances for many years were so hard

as to be really humiliating; very warm-hearted, capable of loving in a superlative fashion, he yet made bitter enemies and covered up his wounds by boasting of the fact. He lived and died, so far as I know, without ever having been loved by a woman, yet his quaint vanity found satisfaction in telling us that he was threatened with more than one suit for breach of promise. But in all this we and his other intimates only saw the effects of that ban of incongruity laid upon him at his birth; he quarrelled with us sometimes, but was so nobly ready to own his fault that we only loved him the better for it. Generosity of heart was his greatest characteristic; I do not think that his worst enemy would ever have appealed to him for assistance in vain; and, poor as he was, and working indefatigably all the time, he would seek out the unfortunate and never rest till he had helped them over their troubles. In the iniquitous spoliation of convents which took place in Rome after the change of government, he, though an ardent Anglican, kept one destitute community of Carmelite nuns alive for months by collecting alms and food among his friends, carrying the supplies to them himself until they were turned out into the streets, and there was no longer a veiled figure behind the grating to receive—and bless him for—his gifts.

It was a great pleasure when he invited my sister and me to accompany him in some of the wandering journeys which resulted in "Days near Rome," especially on one through Umbria, in search of certain Etruscan sepulchres known to exist, but of which all trace had been lost after their discovery in the early part of the nineteenth century. An English clergyman and his wife, two of the cheeriest and most enthusiastic souls in the

world, completed the party. Things Etruscan always had a magic fascination for us girls. The Roman, in both art and legend, seemed modern by comparison, and the mystery that hung over the remoter time and more ancient race had thrilled our imaginations for years. Now we were to get to the forgotten heart of it, for no one with whom we had ever come in contact appeared to have visited the most interesting of the strange rock cemeteries in the empty, rolling country of Umbria; the guide-books gave but the scantiest information about them, and Mr. Hare warned us that we were starting on an arduous enterprise in attempting to locate them at all. He has told in his own clear, popular way all that the public needed to learn about our travels; but he had small space to describe the delights and difficulties we encountered in the course of them. Leaving railways behind after the first few hours, we secured the only available vehicle, a small open carriage with one horse, and drove till the driver refused to drive any longer. On the third day, I think it was, we resolved to explore on foot; and, having unwisely divided our party, all got hopelessly lost, for there are no landmarks visible when once you are launched anywhere on those desolate spaces of ever-undulating country between Viterbo, the southern capital of Etruria, and Chiusi, the older and northern one. That time we were near Viterbo, and five horribly tired and rather cross people finally straggled back to the town long after nightfall; but we had succeeded both there and in the more northern region on the chief points of our quest. And I have been glad ever since that we did, for the strange beauty of what I saw has never been dulled or effaced by anything that came after.

It was mid May in Umbria, Perugino's Umbria of

the bland turquoise sky, and grey-green hills touched with brownish lilac in the hollows and faintly golden on their crests, where the breeze shook the flowering broom out from its crevices in the low walls of rock that break up through the surface of the higher levels. The rock seems to climb with you as you climb; first your feet are conscious of it under the thinning grass; then tiny ridges of it break up through the soil. These grow higher, like low stone walls surrounding the outer precincts of a fortress, ring within ring in strange symmetry; they cease, to make way for the fortress itself, rising straight and sheer as if built by human hands, and separated from the surrounding country, on more than one side perhaps, by sharp rifts in the ground, hundreds of feet deep. The path we follow winds up by gentle degrees because the burdens carried over it were to be heavy ones; but it is cut in the rock some two feet deep, and is so narrow that not only must we go in single file, but also place one foot precisely before the other.

As we near the crest little platforms appear, each the site of a tomb hewn in the stone, low and square at the entrance, but spacious enough in the two chambers within. All that remains is what could not be taken away—the sarcophagi of natural rock in which the terra-cotta ones were placed, and the name of each family carved above the doorway. How they loved the high, open air, these people! The breeze that moved the wildflowers round those doorways seemed to have come straight from the sea, and the sunshine of ages had filtered and sweetened everything till the friable tufa itself had a peculiar sweet perfume like powdered incense. Museums all over Central Italy are rich with the spoils

of these tombs, for the Etruscans vied with the Egyptians in the loving honour they paid to the dead. Only once have modern eyes seen one of these as she was laid to rest, the body of a beautiful woman, decked in the gold of bracelet and necklace that matched her pale gold hair. For a few minutes the discoverers gazed breathless at what the raised lid of the sarcophagus revealed—then the air and the sunshine took it, the perfect form melted and vanished in dust before their eyes, and the gold ornaments lay on the empty stone. And after the urns and the bronzes and the gold ornaments were all carried away, no one cared to visit the rifled sepulchres, and nature had her way with them. I have often fancied I should like to possess one as a hermitage for a few weeks in the noon of the year. What a bath of sunshine and solitude for a fretted soul! If ghosts ever came they would be good company, for no evil spirit ever loved the wind and the sun.

Our companion and leader was an authority on ghosts, and was never happier than when telling some blood-curdling tale to a ring of awestruck listeners such as he ever found ready for him at the Palazzo Odescalchi. Certain forms had to be observed on these occasions. The lamps were ordered away, and we had to sit on the floor in a ring round the story-teller, whose face was only shown us by the firelight, for he preferred winter evenings for these recreations. Then all the denizens of the illicit unseen passed before our eyes, and the horror of the supernatural, the contra-natural, held us in its grip. He not only told the stories, he acted them; he hypnotized his hearers till they felt that the hideous adventures were happening to themselves. The most diabolical light seemed to

gleam in his eyes, and my cousin, Maud Howe, fainted away one night at the end of the famous possession story, in which his horrified sister, pretending to be asleep in the railway carriage, saw her charming French friend actually spit a loathsome devil out of her mouth! When poor Maud recovered consciousness she declared that Mr. Hare had gone through the same performance, and that she had *seen* the devil jump out of his mouth and plunge into our midst!

In his later years, when he was enjoying his well-earned prosperity and life was smiling on him at last, he shed a good deal of this love for the "macabre," and the real sweetness of his nature had much fuller sway. Before passing on from his lovable memory I must record an instance of his goodness which exercised a deciding influence on my brother Marion's career. I have told in a former chapter of Marion's going to India to complete his Sanskrit studies. At that moment the heaviest financial embarrassments had been laid on our family through the dishonesty of a trustee, and Marion would have found it impossible to carry out his wishes but for the kindness of Mr. Hare, who let him have the necessary funds. A few years later Marion had found his vocation, married the girl of his heart, and was in a fair way to attain all his ambitions; he wanted the world to know who had helped him to so much happiness, so he gave a big dinner-party in Mr. Hare's honour, and, without warning the latter of his intention, got up and told his assembled guests the story, asking them to join him in drinking the health of that truest and kindest of friends. Mr. Hare was quite overcome, for his little vanities never entered into the domain of his benefactions.

One of these took up much of his time and thought in his last years. He devoted himself to brightening the lives of poor, hard-working boys, taking relays of them down to Hurstmonceaux for the week-end, year in and year out. The highest compliment that I ever received on my literary work he paid me, for he told me that he read them my little story "The Brown Ambassador" over and over again, and that they never got tired of it.

Another friend who meant a great deal to me at that time was Adelaide Ristori, the Marchesa del Grillo, although I was some years younger than her own daughter. From the first moment of our acquaintance I conceived a profound respect and liking for the great actress, who was such a devoted wife and mother, such a Christian in every way, such a gentle, suave woman of the world, and who yet, as Medea or Phædra, could lay the fear of death on thousands of hearts by the terrific force of her tragedy. Where she was concerned I was stage-struck indeed, and she, as gracious as she was great, took me at that ardent moment of life, and taught me what it all meant, the underlying dignity of supreme passion—how even its aberrations testified to the grandeur of the human heart, and how *love*, lover's love, wife's love, mother's love, was the key to every earthly harmony. When she was preparing to act *Phædra* for the first time in Rome she read the whole tragedy aloud to us—my mother and sister were with me—explaining it as she read, her wonderful voice giving the immortal lines with as much care in her quiet drawing-room as in the theatre. She did the same when about to produce her *Maria Stuarda*, and in both plays her reading was so true that the mere accidents of

staging and costume added but little to my enjoyment when I saw them. Even at that age she was a very beautiful woman, with the perfect features, dark, rippling hair, and graceful carriage of the class from which she sprang, the Roman peasant class, the only one which has kept its distinctive characteristics unspoiled and undiminished through succeeding ages, during which the nobles have intermarried with foreigners so constantly that they have no type which does not more or less belong to some other nationality.

My stepfather had seen Ristori's début, an event which he classed in importance—fortunate man—with his memories of Rachel. Adelaide Ristori had not managed to get past the doors of a regular theatre, and began her career by acting at the "Mausoleo," the Mausoleum of Augustus, utilized for an open-air theatre in the summer, and much frequented by the poorer classes. A rough awning sheltered the audience from the sun; lemonade and "bruscolini" (toasted watermelon seeds) were passed round between the acts; there was only the cold daylight for inspiration, and the roughest of mounting for background. On this unpromising stage a slender, dark-eyed girl, dressed exactly like one of the poor women in the audience, appeared in a piece called *La donna del popolo* (the woman of the people). The play turned on the heroine's affection for her child, the latter represented by a doll which, till Adelaide Ristori began to talk to it and handle it, was the most arrant wooden doll ever put on the market. But my stepfather said that in her arms it came to life; it was torn away from her, and the spectators shrieked with horror; it died, and they burst into tears, men and women sobbing as if their

hearts would break. From that day the Romans were crazy about her, and her success was assured. A long and dazzling career followed, prolonged indeed beyond its due time in order to offset the extravagance of her husband, and provide for the son and daughter whose future was her one great preoccupation. In their babyhood she was so afraid of leaving them to the care of domestics during her enforced absences that the nurse had to accompany her to the theatre, and lay the little ones to rest in her dressing-room till she could go home with them herself. The "smart set" in Rome laughs at everything, virtue included, and Madame del Grillo was often called "La Marquise d'Hiver," because during the season she lived in her palace, and took her charming daughter out into the world like other society mothers, while the summer would see her travel away to earn the money to pay her husband's debts. The silly mockings never disturbed her peace of mind; from first to last she used her great gifts as she believed Heaven meant them to be used, and she carried with her into retirement the consoling consciousness of duties splendidly fulfilled and of a reputation as spotless as it was worldwide.

CHAPTER XXIII

TWO WEDDINGS AND A VOYAGE TO THE EAST

A flowery boudoir and a wet paint-box—Balls and receptions at the Quirinal—Princess Margaret's simplicity and economy—A summer at the Bagni di Lucca—Erich von Rabe—Tosti and Rotoli—Moonlight picnics—An engagement in the family—A rose-coloured wedding that brought luck to the bridesmaids—Spring in the Roman Villas—My engagement and marriage—A surprise on the Grand Canal—Voyage to China—"*It!*"—In the wake of a typhoon—Hospitality of the Merchant Princes—Five days in a river boat—The Tientsin massacre.

IN the winter season of 1872 we were drawn into the stream which set towards the Quirinal. It was a base negation of our political beliefs and of much deeper principles for some of us, but, as our friends represented to our mother, we were not born subjects of the Holy Father and not Catholics (my own lifelong struggle in that direction was not successful till years afterwards), and it was absurd for foreigners to range themselves with the "Blacks," the Papal party, and forgo all the social amusement and interest left in the place. It was not desire for these which overcame my own reluctance. Like almost everybody else, I had been conquered by Princess Margaret, near whom, by some chance, I always sat at the classical concerts which she attended as regularly as we did. I felt that it would be a privilege to know her personally, and, when some of our intimates

who belonged to her household assured us of her willingness to receive us, we put on our best frocks and went, gladly enough. Yet it was with a frightened sensation that I passed under the frowning sculptured Saints, the tiara and keys over the great doorway, and penetrated into the inner recesses of that revered abode for the first time. I had known the gardens well as a child, but the building itself had always seemed as sacred as a church. It was certainly anything but satisfactory as a residence for a mundane Court. The Royal apartments were only accessible by a winding staircase, which on any occasion of general entertainment became hopelessly congested at once. When we climbed it to attend our first audience I was much amused to note, in the corner beside the door at the top, a pile of brooms and mops, hastily flung down by some scared servant either at the approach of visitors or the appearance of a rat, for the old palace was infested with these. They used to come out and run over the keys when Princess Margaret was playing the piano, sending her shrieking from the room; they romped over her dressing-table, gnawing pastilles, upsetting perfumes, eating into her pin-cushions as if they had been cheese. I remember seeing at the fashionable "lingère's" one of these costly lace and batiste objects, embroidered with the arms of Savoy, half bitten away, and Madame Salviati explained that "quella povera Principessa" had sent it to her in the hope that it might be repaired.

The "povera Principessa" detested her enforced residence at the Quirinal, but she was the most gracious and kindly of Royal hostesses there, and had made the small suite which she occupied on an upper floor as bright and cheerful as any rooms could be. For the

private audience we were brought by the Marchesa Villa Marina into a little boudoir, so filled and hung with flowers that it looked and smelt like a conservatory. In thin gilt trellises and hanging baskets, the lovely blooms climbed up the walls, garlanded the pictures, and surrounded the fireplace, forming a charming setting for the prettiest picture of all, the golden-haired Princess dressed in soft green silk that made her pure pale face look like a white flower rising from its sheath. She had been painting, and her materials were all over the room ; after inviting us to be seated, she looked much amused as Madame Villa Marina just saved me from ruining my frock by sitting down on a great box of wet colours which had been deposited, wide open and gorgeously "sloppy," on the sofa. During our stay she talked chiefly to my dear mother, as was fitting, and through all the after-years she never failed in her kindness to "cette chère Madame Terry," as she called her ; but somehow she divined that I was an ardent amateur artist and drew the conversation to the joys of that pursuit. Soon, however, it drifted to what she loved best, books, and from that time my mother, who was a wonderfully intelligent and discriminating reader, used to send her the names of any interesting ones that she came across. In later years I had the honour of "lending" the Princess some cherished volumes—first editions of my brother's works, enriched with affectionate inscriptions to "his dear sister, Mimoli," and, unfamiliar with the ways of Royalty, hoped to see them again, but, like Uncle Lear's Jumblies, they "never came back to me."

Two or three balls were given at the Quirinal during the season, but pleasanter gatherings were the evening

receptions which followed them in Lent and on into the spring, once a fortnight, if I remember rightly. At these, as at the balls, the King never appeared, and Prince Humbert, though visible at moments, vanished long before the evening was over. But the Princess entertained her guests as conscientiously as any private hostess could have done. She banished formality completely, and moved from one group to another, quite alone, and always carrying her own little gilt chair, a light thing that could be managed in one hand, to set it down beside the person she wished to converse with. Her movements were quiet, silent, and graceful; she threaded her way across and around the great crowded room as easily as a butterfly flitting through a garden. It was understood that no one was to offer to carry her chair, and no members of her own household approached her except at a given moment when her cup of bouillon was brought to her—a necessary restorative, for those three hours of constant talking and remembering must have been a heavy strain on her rather frail constitution. Of course there was a tendency to much display of gorgeous frocks and jewels on the part of millionaire Americans as well as on that of Roman "Haute Finance" appearing in society for the first time; but the Princess discounted such extravagance very resolutely, and set a practical example by the simplicity of her own dress. She used to say quite frankly that she was poor and had to wear her frocks as long as they would last. One warm evening, having come to an end of her resources, she appeared in home-made white tarlatan, trimmed all over with little bunches of common wayside fern! True, the fern-sprays were fastened on with diamonds—but she had not had to buy the diamonds, and, used in that

way, they looked like drops of clear water caught among the ferns. She was fond of her famous pearls, I believe, and one ornament she never relinquished, a black velvet band on her wrist, clasped by a miniature of her husband. And here, with all respect for the memory of a brave and kind-hearted gentleman thrust into the most difficult of situations, I must say that King Humbert of Savoy, as he was known and loved in after-years by Italians in general, owed much more to his wise, patient, devoted wife than to any original gifts of character. Hers was by far the stronger character of the two, and her admirable self-control and quiet piety gradually dominated the less satisfactory aspects of his.

She was a faithful Christian, and had refused altogether to come to Rome until she was assured that the Holy Father would overlook his wrongs so far as she was concerned and authorize a priest to minister to her spiritual needs. Pio Nono met her wishes gladly, and the little Church of San Silvestro al Quirinale was indicated as a convenient parish church for her to attend. But she was much more frequently seen at the other San Silvestro, lower down in the town, the church served by English Fathers and, as she used to say, "so beautifully clean that it was a pleasure to kneel down there." After the death of Victor Emmanuel—absolved, blessed, reconciled by his saintly victim—a chaplain was appointed to reside at the Quirinal. When I came back to Rome after my marriage, I found the post occupied by a pleasant and polished ecclesiastic from the North of Italy, with whom I had some interesting talk. It seemed strange to sit down to dinner opposite a soutane decorated like a general's tunic. I think Don —— had been a military chaplain before being ordered to Court. He had a humorous

twinkle in his eye, and always seemed amused at finding himself conversing gaily with the guests of the usurping rulers, in that basilica of a banqueting hall, where the colossal forms of St. Peter and St. Paul loomed and glowered above us as if about to descend from the sculptured ceiling and annihilate us all with the Keys and the Sword. I really breathed more freely in the Quirinal when I found that a good priest had the courage to live there.

But many unexpected things had happened to me before that day. In the summer of 1873 we went to the Bagni di Lucca, several of our Roman intimates having arranged to do the same. In that hill-paradise we met a very tall, very lame, very music-loving German officer, Erich von Rabe by name; and he had a companion from another army, the Austrian one, a creature all music and fire and good looks, called De Lyro. The two formed the most complete contrast of nationality possible to behold, but the stiff-backed Berliner, filled with the Olympian conceit engendered by the successes of 1870, and the versatile Viennese who was struggling to support an absent wife and family by giving music lessons, were quite inseparable. To these were added two notable musicians and composers, Tosti and Rotoli, and, to make things complete, my brother Marion was passing the summer months with us in his birthplace, and brought his ringing baritone voice into the melodious and gay little circle. Never had the inhabitants assisted at such musical sprees before! The woods rang with song by day, and at night, when we women were too tired to stay out any longer, the men put a piano on a handcart, Rotoli was firmly attached to a chair before it as leader and director, and the wandering musicians

From an oil painting

ANNIE CRAWFORD

Madame von Rabe

paraded the avenues, stopping to give long serenades under the windows of all their friends. When we had feasted to the full on their enchanting singing, we rewarded them by letting down a monster flask of Chianti (which Erich had early pronounced "ein ganz famoser Rothwein") out of the window. The thirsty five finished the four litres in a flash, called up their good-nights, and went laughing on to the next villa, where a like treat awaited the inhabitants and themselves.

When the full moon smiled down on us a new diversion took us all abroad for midnight picnics—a most dangerous and fascinating form of dissipation. In the tiny open "bagarinos" which only held two persons, one of whom had to drive, we travelled for miles through the perfumed summer night, between the high-trained vines already heavy with grapes, on into the hills to the deep forests where driving was no longer possible, and where the moon looked down at us indulgently between the branches, seeming to say, "I know it is all my fault, children—romance is my business at this time of year—but do be good if you can!"

I am sure we were good, but flirtation at such moments is as unavoidable as sunburn at midday; there was a round dozen of men and maids under the perfunctory chaperonage of one or two equally young matrons, and a month or two of this sylvan liberty resulted in some temporarily broken hearts and one happy engagement, that of my sister Annie to Erich von Rabe. Annie had often been heard to rail against marriage, and vowed that she would not become any man's captive. Also she detested everything German, and had refused to learn a word of the language, so her intercourse with her betrothed was carried on in French—second nature to

her indeed, but in Erich's mouth a dialect faithfully copied from that of Balzac's immortal "Cousin Pons." They understood each other perfectly, however, and during all their married life had only one quarrel, about a month after their wedding—as to what the name of their second son was to be!

That winter we all learned a good deal about Prussians and their ways, for Erich's mother and brother and sister came down before the marriage and remained in Rome for some little time afterwards. The wedding took place just after Christmas—a rose-coloured wedding, for Annie utterly refused to appear in pure white on a cold winter morning. Very beautiful she looked in her clinging tea-rose satin, and Erich with his pale handsome face and splendid height made an imposing bridegroom. There were two ceremonies, one at the English Church for her benefit and one at the German Embassy for his, the Ambassador, Count Keudell, being one of his oldest friends. As Erich knew no English and Annie no German, each had to learn the vows and responses by rote in the other's language. Annie's "Ich will" was her first essay in a tongue with which she soon became unusually fluent, though she never mastered the intricacies of its grammar, and her own children used to gently correct her genders—"Liebe mama, if you don't mind, please say '*der* Mann'; 'die' is for the feminine." The real show figure of the day was Erich's younger brother, Oscar, in full Guards' uniform of white with the gold-winged helmet and seven-leagued boots—the latter (he was paired with me) causing him to utter whispered curses when he attempted to kneel down in them. We bridesmaids were four, and though not one of us was engaged yet, we were all married within the year, Bessie

Ward to Baron Ernst Schönberg, Adelheid von Rabe to Frederick Robertson of the Foreign Office, Edith Story to the Marchese Perruzzi of Florence, and I to Hugh Fraser. I remember that Edith Story that day laughingly announced her intention of becoming an old maid, "with all the forms, my dears. I don't want the bridegroom, but I want to have all the rest of the advantages that these silly people are enjoying. I am going to have the appropriate trousseau, black lace mittens, woollen shawls, no end of grey silk frocks and flowery caps, and you will all make me presents of teapots, lapdogs, and reticules."

Perruzzi smiled wisely at the pronunciamento. As for me, when the long, happy, but very fatiguing day was over, and the "Sposi" had driven off to Albano, I subsided on the floor of the ball-room, where we young people had been dancing our finery to shreds; and, looking round at the general débris of orange blossoms, bouquets, garlands, bon-bons, favours, and wedding-cake, told the others that if they ever came to my wedding it would be on a June morning, that I would wear a white muslin frock, and give them nothing but strawberries and cream. That was on the 29th of December, 1873, and on the 15th of June, 1874, I carried out my programme to the letter.

I think the intervening six months were the happiest of my life. Erich and Annie remained in Italy for some little time, so that I did not feel that I had lost her. I had my adorable mother all to myself, and I was learning to know—as far as one can know a man before marrying him—my future husband. The spring was a dream of beauty, and every day took us out to some lovely villa, always with the band of intimates and contemporaries,

Brazzas, Gigliuccis, Antonellis, De Rasloffs, Claude Cobham, and others, with whom all my pleasantest interests were bound up. When the end of April filled the house, the city, the villas, with lilacs and lilies and roses, Hugh Fraser and I understood each other at last. He had been Second Secretary of the British Legation (as it was then) for two years; and had just been appointed to Peking, so no long delay was possible. Six weeks sufficed for our engagement; a little extra leave was granted him afterwards, which we spent in Venice, where my dear people joined us for a few weeks, to see the last of me before our long separation. I knew every stone in the place; but Hugh had never been there before, and he fell deeply in love with the silent beautiful Queen of the Adriatic; and ever afterwards, when life grew too strenuous for his rather indolent taste, he used to threaten to give up the Service and apply for the post of Consul there. Of course we lived on the water, and our gondolier became quite a friend, though it took us some time to understand his speech. I shall never forget his delight when a gorgeous parrot, the pet of a rich old lady, broke from its perch on her balcony, and came flopping down into the canal just under his hand. It tried to bite the hand to pieces, but was deftly rolled up in a red handkerchief and taken back to its mistress, whose generous reward, as he explained to us, was a great help to a poor man who had to support "cinco putei"!

We had another amusing surprise one day as we were moving up the Grand Canal towards the sunset hour. Venice is always full of music; but our ears were suddenly saluted by a loud chorus of quite un-Venetian strains, those of an Offenbach opéra comique. Looking

round us in every direction, we found that they came from the water itself. Three swimmers were bearing down on us; the first head, with single eyeglass firmly fixed in one eye, was that of Waldo Story, the second that of his good-looking brother Julian, while the last belonged to the Rev. Mr. ——, their clergyman tutor, a delightfully correct, Roman-collared Anglican divine. There was no Roman collar visible that day. The good man ducked modestly under water as he passed us; but he, as well as his pupils, was singing lustily:

"Très joli-e, peu poli-e,
A la bouche-e un gros mot—
C'est la fille de la mère Angot!"

On the 21st of August we sailed for China, straight from the Piazzetta of St. Mark, in those days the starting-point for Italian travellers to the East. The parting with my people was unexpectedly terrible. Till the moment came I had not realized what it was to mean, this going away for five years from everything that was my very own; and I remember that I cried so long and so bitterly that the Captain of the P. & O. steamer advised my husband to take me downstairs and let the stewardess put me to bed before I made myself really ill. Then I pulled myself together. Hugh rolled me up in a deck chair, made me drink a glass of champagne, and put "Lorna Doone," my mother's last gift, into my hands; and by the time the sun went down on a sea all crimson and gold, my thoughts were already flying forward to all the many strange and beautiful things I was so soon to see. Then the Adriatic turned rough, and led our old tub of a liner one of those memorable dances which wipe out normal consciousness for days at a time. I had been a wretched sailor

all my life; and my dear mother had seriously wished to have a special cabin constructed for me on the model of the one arranged for Napoleon I. when he went to Egypt, a cabin swung on different pivots, so that it remained level even when the ship was trying to stand on her head. Hugh represented to her that we were to change our ship three times before reaching Shanghai, and that the luxury she was thinking of would cost a small fortune; he assured her that he would cure me of seasickness inside of a week, which he did, wise man, by disregarding my despairing appeals to be left alone to die in my bunk. Every morning he carried me up on deck, and kept me there all day, whatever the weather might be, at the same time limiting my diet to champagne, biscuits, and cold beef. In an incredibly short time I was perfectly well; and when the next storm caught us—the turn of the monsoon in the Indian Ocean—I never broke down till the third day, when the Captain himself was prostrated with sea-sickness, and all the detachable truck on deck had long been washed overboard. People do not suffer so badly now; the enormous size of the liners minimizes almost all suggestion of motion, and the greatly increased comfort of the arrangements makes a long journey a real luxury. In 1874 we considered an 8,000-ton boat a monster, now it is a cockle-shell. Fortunately for me we began our wanderings in something fairly big, so that when we changed to our last ship at Hong Kong, I was already sufficiently broken in not to mind its diminutive size and wild careerings, or even the abominable, acrid, all-pervading smell of the opium cargo it was carrying to Shanghai.

But I had a bad fright when we reached Hong Kong.

For two days before, the sky had been inky black, the sea the same colour and oily, and running mountains high ; there was not a breath of wind ; the barometer appeared to be in convulsions, the needle dancing wildly to each point in turn, while every object on board was covered with horrible black flies. We lay to for twenty-four hours to let " It," whatever it might be, get on well ahead of us.

None of the officers would tell me what " It " was, and even Hugh pretended not to know, but I found out all right when we stopped outside Hong Kong harbour, our further progress impeded by a mass of wreckage through which human corpses were beginning to find their way to the surface. The P. & O. agent, ashy pale and still trembling in every limb, climbed on board and told us the ghastly tale. " It " was the worst typhoon of the past fifty years ; swooping down into that deep tea-kettle of a harbour, " It " had taken just two hours to rake Hong Kong to its foundations, wreck or injure every vessel caught there, annihilate the swarms of sampans, and drown ten thousand of the poor coolies who with their wives and families lived in them. The Bund was swept away, not a tree in the Botanical Gardens was left standing, and half the buildings were roofless ruins. All haste was being made to bury the dead, for the heat was intense and a pestilence was feared, but the atmosphere was that of a vast charnel house. Shaking and dizzy, I was put on shore—and screamed, for I had all but stepped on an appalling object awaiting burial. It was all a pretty severe ordeal for a happy bride, and my nerves were so shaken that during the week we had to remain in Hong Kong I could not be left alone for a moment without feeling

faint and sick; and I was devoutly thankful when we embarked for the last port of our immediate journey, Shanghai. As I knew nothing of what lay beyond, I imagined that this would be the end of my troubles. Hugh had been all over the route before, but he wisely held his peace as to what was still to come until I should have recovered a little from the Hong Kong experience.

Of course I was filled with enthusiastic admiration of Ceylon, Penang, Singapore, but I found China disappointing in the extreme, and the approach to Shanghai most depressing, with those wastes of yellow, turgid waters, the long wait before the tide would carry us over the bar, and the town itself looking as if it were slipping from the mud flats into the sea. Nothing could have been sadder or uglier, but once housed in the Jardine-Mattheson Palace—it was nothing less—my spirits revived. For ten days we were royally entertained, I feeling quite overcome by this, my first experience of the princely hospitality of the East. Not a single member of the firm was known to us, but no sooner had our steamer cast anchor than one of the partners came on board and carried us off as if we had been long-expected relations. We had to make a little stay in the place to buy furniture, nothing being procurable farther north. I had brought all the draperies and hangings from Rome, but the heavier things had to be collected in Shanghai, and great fun we had in doing it, I feeling immensely proud as my mother's last wedding gift, some three hundred pounds in gold, made matters pleasant and easy for us. That money had been a great care to me *en route*, and I cannot imagine now why it was not converted into a more portable

form. The first time we were going on shore for the day, I took it to the purser and asked him to lock it up for me. "And what should I lock it up for, me dear young lady?" said he. "Sure, haven't ye the safest place in the ship in your own cabin? Dhrop it in your dirty-clothes bag—nobody'll be looking for it there!"

The heavy little parcel was much diminished by the time I left Shanghai, and my already voluminous luggage proportionately swelled with gauzes and ivories and sandalwood boxes—all the charming nothings that mean so much when one is young. Then our kind hosts put us on board a coast steamer and we started for Tientsin, with an addition of one to the party, a little amah called "Chica," dressed, as it seemed to me, in about fifty yards of black sticking-plaster; she was a pretty, devoted creature, with marvellous hair, on which, when it was let down, she could stand easily, but in all the time she was with me it never came down unless the only other "Canton amah" in Peking were there to do it up again for her. Like all Cantonese, she looked upon the people of the north as her born enemies. For five mortal days and nights we tossed up the coast in that wicked little steamer, the rough weather making it inadvisable to land even for a few hours' rest at Chifu. At last she came to a resolute standstill outside the Taku forts, and no power on earth would get her over the bar and up the river. It was five miles to the Settlement, but rather than spend another night on board I said I would walk, and we started forth gaily enough, but five days of seasick starvation had a good deal diminished my strength, and I sank down once or twice in a cabbage field, convinced that I could go no farther.

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My husband's stern reproaches got me up again, and late that evening we wandered into the Consulate, where nobody was expecting us till the next day, and kind Mrs. Mungan had to fit me out with all the toilet necessaries—a sad humiliation for a young woman with thirty frocks and countless dozens of everything else in her missing boxes!

My husband was now on familiar ground, for he had spent five years in Peking before I had made his acquaintance in Italy, knew a good deal of the language, and much more about the people. He really liked China, and was returning there gladly, facts which went far to make my first experiences of the country interesting and pleasant, though not always comfortable. The Frasers are all Spartans. I had no tastes in that direction, and surveyed with dismay the preparations for our journey up the Pei-Ho. Hugh's former servant, Chien-Tai, had come down to meet us, all smiles and k'ot'ows for his old master and new mistress. Under his supervision a fleet of five boats, with five men to row each boat, was engaged; our properties filled three of these, one served as the kitchen and store-room, and one was fitted up as sleeping-room, dining-room, and everything else for ourselves. It was about twenty feet long, and perhaps eight wide at the beam. The fore part was covered in with a tiny deck, on which we could just place two chairs: at night the boards came up, and the crew got underneath, packed like sardines in a tin, fitted the boards tightly down over themselves, and slept peacefully. Our own apartment consisted of a tiny caboose sunk aft, just large enough for a mattress to be laid on the floor at night, and replaced by a table in the daytime. The gunwales formed a narrow

stepping-place on either side, where the men could walk up and down as they poled us along, one of their number generally running ahead on the river bank, tugging at a tow-rope to keep us upstream. At night the caboose was closed in all round with wooden shutters, and in the morning poor Hugh used to hurry into his clothes, and go on shore for a walk while I attempted to make my toilet, in all but darkness, with the help of one tin basin, muddy river water, and a hand glass. Those were strenuous moments !

We had one perfect hour the evening we left Tientsin, when the setting sun turned the sky gold and the water crimson, and we sat on our little deck and talked of all that we meant to do in the coming years. But that night the rain began, and I learnt what rain meant. I had not thought the skies could hold so much. Persistent, torrential, all-penetrating, it accompanied us the whole way to Tung Chow, impeding our progress so seriously that the short journey occupied five whole days. When the downpour thinned a little the men consented to work, but when it was at its best they bolted into their rat-holes and pulled the planks down on themselves, and neither Hugh's commands nor Chien-Tai's voluble abuse could get them out again. Neither would they move at night. When dark fell they made fast to stones or stakes on the bank till sunrise, and as we were now in the middle of October the days were growing short. Once we stuck on a mudbank for twenty-four hours in sheets of rain. Our crew went off to the cooking-boat to smoke and chatter with their companions ; we had to close all our shutters tightly into place, and pass the day in the black caboose lighted by two candles, while Chien-Tai, deeply con-

cerned at our misfortunes, tried to console us by serving two large extra meals beyond the three regulation ones which he cooked with marvellous success among my trousseau trunks on another boat. Nothing could surpass the poor fellow's ingenuity and kindness; not a course that we would have had on shore was omitted at any time, and at all hours of the day and night he would clamber on board at my call and try to make things more bearable for us. Only once, when the currents were running with great force in crazy directions, did we lose him; the ropes broke and the boats got separated, and for twelve hours Hugh and I had nothing to eat, and felt as hungry as the babes in the wood. But my dear Hugh was a splendid traveller, and entertained me with so many queer accounts of his former sojourn in China that I got through that day and all the others as cheerily as possible, except for my secret terrors at night when I imagined the boatmen might take a fancy to murder us and the faithful Chien-Tai, and throw us into the river for the sake of our valuables.

For it was during these days of floating imprisonment on the Pei-Ho that my husband told me the terrible story of the Tientsin massacre in 1870. It was still very fresh in his mind, and, since conditions had apparently changed little in the intervening four years, it haunted my dreams for a long time, till I became convinced of the fact so constantly impressed upon me by all residents in Peking—that that was the safest place in the Empire, because it was the seat of government, and outrages committed there could be brought home to the perpetrators, whereas, when these occurred at even a small distance from the capital, the Ministers

could fall back on their habitual excuse, the impossibility of either controlling the passions of an infuriated populace or discovering the real offenders.

The Tientsin disaster occurred in June, and had evidently been abetted if not planned by the local authorities. There was no shadow of provocation for it beyond the seething hatred of foreigners, always let loose at the most propitious moment. The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul had a hospital and orphanage in the town, the "orphaned" being almost all unfortunate children whom their parents, not desiring, had, after the abominable Chinese fashion, thrown out into the street immediately after their birth, to be devoured alive by stray dogs if they did not die of exposure first. That a population capable of carrying out this atrocity should suddenly become alarmed as to the welfare of the children under the Sisters' care is incredible, but this was put forward as an excuse for public excitement and a threatened raid on the establishment. The Sisters invited inquiry, offering to show the popular delegates all over the place; but the French Consul, arriving on the spot, grew angry, and evicted the intruders rather violently. He has been blamed for this conduct, but it really had no effect on the outcome, for a general massacre of all foreigners in the Settlement had been planned, and events would have taken their course independently of him. The Chinese are generally faithful to their foreign masters, and more than one warning had already been secretly conveyed, but the warnings fell on deaf ears. The Settlement was British—policed and governed by Britishers—and people had got into the habit of believing that the Chinese had a healthy fear of interfering with the Union Jack.

There was not even a gunboat within call. The French Consul appealed to the Chinese Magistrate, but the latter refused to interfere, and the brave Frenchman made his way back into the mob surrounding the orphanage quite alone, pistol in hand, in a gallant attempt to defend the Sisters. He was at once killed, the place stormed and burnt, and all the Sisters murdered after being subjected to indescribable indignities. The thing had happened so suddenly that there was no time for members of other nationalities to come to the rescue, and had they been able to do so they would only have lost their lives too, the rioters being far superior in numbers. The French Consul's servants, expecting that his residence would be attacked, tried to save his wife, dressing her in Chinese costume and telling her to run down the street to a certain house where she would be safe till the excitement should subside, but the poor lady apparently knocked at the wrong door. It was opened, and she was immediately cut down by the owner.

Meanwhile the whole foreign population had rushed to the British Consul for protection, and the compound was crowded with frenzied men, women, and children. Mr. Lay, who was ill and suffering at the time, got a mounted messenger off to Peking with an appeal for help, and on that morning of the 22nd of June the first news of the disaster burst on the Legation like a thunderclap. Mr. Wade made a peremptory demand for troops to be sent down to quell the rioters, but without waiting for them to start he and Hugh galloped down to their unhappy compatriots in Tientsin, covering the eighty miles in a few hours, and fearing to find not a soul alive. Nor would they have done so but that Heaven had intervened. The summer rains, not due for another six

weeks, suddenly descended on the country like a deluge, and the Chinese, who will face anything but rain, withdrew into their dwellings and postponed further massacres till the downpour should cease. Arriving at the Consulate, the Englishmen found it barricaded for a siege; all available arms and ammunition had been hastily brought in, and while her husband and the other men were preparing to sell their lives as dearly as possible, Mrs. Lay was ministering to the wants of the women and children. Hugh said that he had never seen anything like the quiet heroism of that delicate little woman all through the next two days till the promised troops arrived on the scene. Moving about, smiling and laughing and making little jokes, her own baby on her arm, organizing games to keep the children happy, distributing what there was of food, helping her sick husband by writing reports and despatches for him, she inspired the terrified refugees with a hope and confidence which she was very far from feeling herself; for in the intervals of her many occupations she constantly slipped away to the water-gate of the Consulate, and with the help of my husband and a servant dragged up the poor mangled corpses that were floating by—fearful evidences of the fate that might descend on her and hers from one moment to another. Mercifully the rain never ceased for an instant until order was restored. Then began one of those long struggles for reparation and indemnity so discouragingly familiar in the history of foreign relations with China.

I think it was two or three months after the event that the Superior of the Lazarists—the sons of St. Vincent de Paul, as the Sisters of Charity are his daughters—went to the Maison Mère of the latter in

Paris, to ask for volunteers to replace the Sisters who had been murdered. No commands, great or small, are ever given in the family of St. Vincent. "Would you like to do this?" is the invariable formula employed. The Sœur Servante, as the head of the house is called, listened to the appeal and sent for a young Sister to lay it before her. The whole terrible story was told, and then came the question, "Would you like to go, my dear?" The little Sister was perfectly free to accept or refuse, but she only replied by another question: "I left my new apron at the dispensary, ma Sœur—shall I go and fetch it before I start?"

CHAPTER XXIV

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF CHINA AND THE CHINESE

Arrival at Peking—Description of the old Legation—The Jewel Fair—Quaint affectations of Manchu Court ladies—The Mongolians and their Princess—Korean dress and habits—An alarming apparition—The Imperial Carriage Park and its treasures—Audacious young Britishers—The young Emperor and his marriage—His journey to the Tombs of his Ancestors—Forty miles of "décor de théâtre"—Two old Empresses and one young one—The harem—Death of the Emperor not announced for three weeks—The Dowager Empress sets aside the rightful heir—Condemns the young Empress to commit suicide—Character of the Dowager—A Cabinet Minister has an unpleasant experience at the Palace—An American girl has a delightful one—The Empress reported a convert to "Christian Science"!

WE reached Tung Chow at last, and great was my joy at finding a smart, friendly British constable waiting to escort us to Peking. The good man never knew how near he came to being kissed that day. The sight of him was almost too much for my feelings after a week of those hideous and, as I fancied, hostile Chinese faces around me. How gladly I scrambled out of the horrible little boat and into the luxurious palanquin which had been sent down for me from Peking. Hugh rode on with the escort man, who, however, kept a sharp eye on my four bearers as they trotted rapidly over the wide, uneven road. A crowd of mule-carts followed with Chien-Tai and Chica, and all our other possessions, and

when we had done about ten of the sixteen miles that lie between Tung Chow and Peking, two horsemen loomed up and greeted us with joyous shouts—Edwardes, the Second Secretary, and Everard of the Consular Service, both old friends of Hugh's. But I was too occupied with staring at the strange landscape to take much notice of them. As we approached the town, the everlasting fields of millet stubble give way before vast spaces of yellow dust, beyond which the enormous walls of the Manchu city stretched as far as I could see, four miles in an exact square, with huge outstanding buttresses all along their length and triple-roofed watch-towers at every corner. It looked like a great sulky monster waiting to spring. The dusk was falling as we passed through the gates, and from that time on I took in very little, being really worn out and only too thankful to find myself at last at the Legation, where Mr. and Mrs. Wade received and comforted us, making us stay with them for several weeks while our own bungalow was being put in order. Another friend we found, or rather he found us, a little dog that Amy Lowder (the step-daughter of Sir Rutherford Alcock) had given Hugh when she left China. He was a noble dog, who had come straight from the Imperial Palace; during Hugh's two years of absence he had lived at the Second Secretary's house, but the first night we arrived he came and lay on the doorstep of our apartment and refused to be taken away. So "Dolly" (short for Dolgorouki) was at once taken into our family circle, and became my shadow—till my eldest son was born in the following year, when he withdrew from my society in jealous disgust and re-attached himself to Hugh.

By the time the winter shut us in we were installed

in our own house, and I was starting valiantly to learn Chinese. Mr. Wade encouraged my efforts, and exhorted me to "make a deep incision—a very deep incision, at once—it is the only way!" When I found that several hours' study a day for at least two years would barely familiarize me with the simpler characters, my courage failed, and I contented myself with "colloquial," which I soon picked up from the servants, none of whom, excepting my amah, spoke a word of English, "Pigin" being quite unknown in the North.

The winter was a severe one; but, as is always the case with people who come from temperately warm countries, I felt the cold very little at first. Indeed, the greatest inconvenience I suffered was from the intense heat given out by the huge fires of soft coal, such fuel as I have never seen before or since. It was brought into the compound on camels, some twenty tied together, the nose-string of one to the tail of the next, an arrangement which did not improve their naturally vicious tempers. When the great gate opened to admit one of these processions everybody gave the camels and their drivers a wide berth, for one kick of the heavy spongy feet would disembowel a man. They were very picturesque, however, the huge brown beasts, their fur so thick at that time of year that it hung on them like a mantle. In the summer they shed it freely, and it was lying all over the dusty highways in big lumps that rolled and fluttered like live things in the slightest breeze.

During the first two or three months I made few excursions beyond the compound except to return visits at the other Legations, partly because what I had seen of the streets was the reverse of attractive, partly because

there was so much to interest one within our own walls. The place was a little world in itself; there was the "big house," the Envoy's residence, which consisted of a number of splendidly decorated Chinese buildings, stretching with their enclosed courts from the right of the central entrance (guarded by two lovely blue and green porcelain monsters) right away to the northern boundary, with a road on either hand, the one near the street containing houses for the mounted constables who constituted the escort, and on the other the student quarters and the buildings used as a Chancery, whence the name I believe it still bears of "Chancery Lane." The centre of the compound showed a great open space on which and farther south stood various pretty bungalows with their gardens, inhabited by the Staff. The eastern gatehouse contained the arsenal—a reassuring collection of arms and ammunition—and the western one made a background for the general stables, which had to be roomy since everybody owned two or three ponies.

There were but these two entrances to the strongly walled enclosure, and each was always guarded by an escort man as well as by a Chinese gatekeeper; no one was allowed to come in who could not account for himself to them, the porter being held personally responsible for the good behaviour of his countrymen. The keeper of the front gate was a majestic old fellow with a button of some dignity on his hat, and he had grown nearly as broad as he was long on the toll he extorted from curio and provision merchants, pony and harness sellers, servants seeking employment, and all the tribe that daily came and went to supply the needs of the vast establishment. Not one passed the gate without having satisfied his demands, pecuniary and otherwise,

The employé at the back gate had to content himself with squeezes on the ponies' feed; and even there he had not a free hand, for the stables, though primarily under the charge of Sergeant Crack, the head of the escort, had a viceroy in the person of the official "Ting Chai," a splendidly dressed horseman who galloped ahead to clear the road when we made expeditions into the city. He had to keep the crowd of "Mafus," the grooms, in order, and, of course, took a percentage of all their wages. From the moment you land in China you are in the grip of "Squeeze"; if you smile and resign yourself, you will be made perfectly comfortable; if you resist, Heaven help you, for nobody else will lift a finger for you!

The Legation had been the residence of one of the Princes, and the original buildings were beautifully decorated in the most elaborate Chinese style, the ceilings showing every cross-beam, from the heaviest down to the smallest, painted in rich peacock greens and blues, picked out with gold, the pillars being of that vivid Asiatic scarlet that neither sun nor rain can pale. The courts were filled with flowers and shrubs in porcelain pots of many colours; and when the winter robbed these of their beauty, the gardeners made spring indoors with a series of blooms nursed in deep pits underground, and produced at precisely the right stage when they were going to burst into flower. The head gardener was a wizened old man with an extra thumb on each hand. I remember his pride when he brought me a bunch of roses from his secret catacombs on Christmas morning. Another constant amusement was the daily visit of one or more dealers in curios, furs, and embroideries. The regulation hour was the one after the twelve o'clock

breakfast (we never talked about "Tiffin" in the north), when everybody was likely to be in a good temper, and there was leisure for the everlasting bargaining which is as dear as money to the Chinese soul. Coming out of the dining-room, we would find our merchants established on the verandah, all their wares artistically spread out for inspection; and rarely did they leave without something large or small having been added to one's collection.

Of course everybody collected; half the time there was nothing else to do; and the only quarrels that occurred in the peaceful community broke out when some too ardent acquirer infringed the law and began bidding for what another was already bargaining for. One lady frequently did this, and in consequence her memory was not held in benediction in the Legation. The finest pieces were never hawked abroad. The great merchants kept them in an inner room of their own houses, and only showed them when convinced, by your scorn of everything in the front shop, that you were a real connoisseur. Then with much mystery you would be led into the inner sanctum, tea was served, much polite conversation on your valuable health ensued, and then some marvellous piece was brought out of its box, stripped of wadded silk wrappings and displayed. No price was mentioned for a long time. When it was announced it was always exorbitant. On principle one offered the half, and then the owner smiled happily, said he had no desire to part with his property, put the lovely thing away, offered you more tea, and begged you to honour his "dirty house" by calling again. Repeated visits continued over several months resulted in one's acquiring the object at about 60 or 70 per cent. of

the first sum named, as both parties knew perfectly well from the start; but much pleasant talk and bargaining had been enjoyed meanwhile, and the Chinese had "saved his face" by appearing to yield only by slow degrees and out of regard for one's friendship. When anything of real value changed hands he always threw in some little trifle as a "cumshaw," a little present for luck, and one parted from him on the best of terms.

The big merchant was always very much of a gentleman, and scrupulously refrained from offering to a new buyer anything that another customer was already bargaining for. He was really a very rich man too, and we knew that he spoke truth when he told us that the wealthy Chinese would give quite as high prices for good pieces as any foreigner. If one really loved beautiful things he took pleasure in showing them, even when he knew that they were far beyond one's purse. I went again and again to one establishment for the joy of gazing at a pair of vases of purest "sang de bœuf," nearly two feet high and worth thousands of taels. The colour is the hardest of all to produce, containing among other ingredients, I was told, a quantity of powdered garnet. This is apt to run and scatter on the delicate surface, and only a small percentage of pieces made are (or were, for the manufacture of fine porcelain is a lost art now) perfect. But those which are have an indescribable richness of depth and brilliancy, as if dipped in many baths of melted rubies. The living purple of the "aubergine" comes next in beauty, I think, and then the floral and landscape creations on the tiny wine-cups of white eggshell china, which seem to have been moulded and decorated by more than human eyes and fingers. Hugh knew a good deal about Keramics; I,

nothing at all; but though I never learned to read the seals, I could after a time tell the age and value of most of the pieces that came under my notice, and thoroughly appreciated the small but fine collection he had made during his first residence in Peking. It spoilt my taste for anything else in that way; Japanese porcelain seemed to me very inferior, and the finest European products looked coarse and uninteresting after the old Chinese ones.

Now that I am launched on this frivolous subject I must mention the attractions of the Jewel Fair in Peking. One street is quite given up to the jewellers; indeed each trade used to have its own quarters, occupying a larger or meaner thoroughfare according to its dignity and importance; but for about a month during the winter a fair was held to which jewel-workers from far and near brought their wares, and the show was really quite dazzling, though of course there were no gems in the European sense of the word. A good many pearls were exhibited, it is true, but they were of poor quality and never tempted me. Most of the booths displayed wonderful ornaments in amethyst and crystal, jade and turquoise. I remember coveting a bunch of grapes of natural size carved out of a lump of amethyst; when the sun struck it one seemed to see the purple juice quivering in the berries. It had taken a man ten years of his life to carve. One of the prettiest things I ever saw was a little cup of topaz-tinted crystal with a rose-coloured butterfly poised on its rim; the artist who had carved it swore that it was all one piece and that the colours were natural!

The "fetzui"—the green jade of the colour and almost of the transparency of emerald—was yet more

highly prized. A pair of earrings made like tiny fern fronds cost fifteen hundred taels—one thousand pounds. The Mongolian turquoise, though coarse, was beautiful in colour. On my first visit to the fair my husband bought me a long string of beads of it, so big and heavy that when I came home my people thought they were blue china. The Manchu ladies managed to introduce a great many quaint ornaments into their costume—diadems of the miraculously blue kingfishers' feathers set with topaz and rubies, bracelets and necklaces of "fetzui" and turquoise, and, daintiest touch of all, hanging from the top button of the embroidered robes, a peach-shaped vinaigrette of pierced ivory, minutely carved and painted, hung with fringes of coral and pearl, and filled every day with fresh petals of jessamine or "Quei-Wha" (*Olea fragrans*) or orange blossom, whichever might be in season—a refinement of perfumery which I wonder European élégantes have never copied.

The endless leisure enjoyed by rich women in the East permits of many such elaboratenesses of toilet and surroundings. A Japanese lady thinks nothing of spending four or five hours on dressing to pay a visit, and I fancy the Manchu dames—the only ones I ever saw—took even longer. But the visit was as lengthy as the preparation. It was something of an ordeal to have the wife of a great dignitary arrive at eleven or twelve o'clock and stay till sunset. All her female relations accompanied her and brought two maids apiece, so that the compound seemed filled with palanquins and mule-carts. The maids were supposed to support their mistresses' tottering footsteps when they descended from their chairs—a piece of affectation which always particularly amused me. The Manchus do not make cripples of the baby girls, and

all the Court ladies have natural feet which they can use as well as anybody else. But the praise and fame of the "Golden Lilies" has filtered from Chinese tradition into theirs, and though they have been spared the sufferings and disabilities of their less fortunate sisters, it is the correct thing to simulate the latter and hobble along with an attendant gravely supporting each elbow. Once inside a foreign house, however, curiosity overcomes fashion, and they flit about from room to room fingering everything, trying on one's clothes, turning out wardrobes and asking the use of every article, and, strange to say, carrying off all the toilet soap in sight. Why this should particularly attract them we never could imagine. Our servants told us that they regarded it as a palatable sweetmeat, and cut it up in little squares to distribute to their friends! Generous restitution for the trifling theft was always made the next day in presents of cakes and fruits; of the latter the market offered a great variety all the year round, from the "pai-li," the delicate waxy apple that tastes like a pear, to the miniature green orange preserved in syrup, with any number of fresh or dried sweet things between.

During the cold months people's appetites were portentous—"breakfast" was dinner minus about one dish—and we fared royally on the frozen game brought down by the Mongols and sold in their own particular market quite near the Legation. There, venison ("yellow sheep," as the Chinese called it), pheasant, "gelinotte," blackcock, and wild duck could be had as long as the ice lasted, frozen stiff of course, but none the worse for that. The Mongolians amused and interested me greatly, and as I had to cross their market settlement, round which they all lived, as often as I went to the Russian Legation,

I had plenty of opportunities of observing them. They were friendly people with good broad faces, as brown and rough as their own camels, but much franker and honester than the Pekingese. Their chief and ruler at that time was a young Princess who kept them in splendid order and whom they appeared to adore. She was a great powerful creature, always smiling when I met her, and an exceedingly picturesque figure as she rode about among her subjects dressed in embroidered leather coat and leggings, with long strings of pearl and turquoise and coral hanging round her neck and across her mighty chest down to her saddlebow. Her long black hair was braided in numberless tails with the same ornaments and crowned with a round fur cap full of jewels ; great plaques of turquoise engraved with gold studded her belt, in which several turquoise-handled daggers showed aggressively, and her saddle and bridle were enriched with turquoise and gold wherever they could be applied. She was a study in brown and blue and gold, and would have made a splendid subject for a picture. The Chinese despised the Mongols for their honesty—it was so easy to cheat the " children of the Northern Deserts " that there was no fun in doing so except for the many merchants and moneylenders who had travelled to their country and found it worth while to live amongst them. They were, however, very popular at the Russian Legation, where a certain number of Cossacks were always kept. These understood their language and were always ready to talk to them, being indeed so like them in appearance as to suggest a not remote cousinship of race.

A far less attractive visitor was the Korean, whose Legation was also near ours. The Koreans seemed like people from some other planet, but for one thing, their

cynical love of all the dirt our dirty earth can supply. Their livid narrow faces seemed scarcely human, and the absurdity of their costume bordered on the freakishness of insanity. Strangers to soap and water, they clothed themselves in thickly wadded, voluminous-skirted garments of the most delicate tints, dreamy blue, pale rose, sunset lilac—all sounding charming enough, but when worn month in, month out, till coated with dirt, anything but pretty to behold. The cold weather necessitated the piling of one robe over another in good Chinese fashion, but whereas the Chinese let his wadded layers hang loose from the neck, the Korean strapped them in with the tightest of belts somewhere under the armpits in First Empire style. His head was crowned by a very tall hat with a wide black tarpaulin brim, the steeple-like crown being built of transparent wire so as to resemble a meat-safe. One of the Legation officials was a very intelligent man, and used to come, under cover of darkness, to take English lessons from one of our students. He seemed shy of showing himself by day, so it happened once or twice that I ran up against him in the evening as I was crossing the compound to one of the other bungalows—and immediately ran away again, for he made a weird apparition striding along in that strange costume, swinging a cryptically inscribed paper lantern close to the ground to light his steps.

On the side away from the street and its canal, the wall of the compound was also the wall of the "Imperial Carriage Park," a vast enclosure full of trees where we had permission to walk, but not to ride. There were several splendid pavilions in the grounds, nominally devoted to housing the Imperial vehicles, but it was generally believed that the buildings were used as

storehouses by the inhabitants of the Palace for the valuables of every kind offered them by aspirants for place and power. They were reported to be piled to the roof with rolls of gold and silver tissue, silks and embroideries, bronzes and precious articles of all kinds from every part of the Empire. Occasionally the owners were hard up or else robbers found their way in, for marvellous stuffs covered with emblems consecrated to Imperial use alone were brought to us for sale, covered with many wrappings and offered under the seal of secrecy. Two sets of carpets I remember, which the connoisseurs there and elsewhere pronounced the only examples of their kind ever put on the market. They were intended to cover the "Kang," the raised stone platform at the end of each apartment, where the Chinese, rich and poor, spread their beds at night, lighting fires below in winter so as to warm the couches through and through. Each carpet consisted of three strips some twenty feet long; one set, which passed into my own possession, was of ruby velvet brocade with gorgeous blazonry of green and rose and a perfect Greek key pattern for a border in pale rose. The other was like it but in Imperial yellow. The colours swam and danced before one's eyes! We could see across to some of the yellow roofs of the Palace itself, but at that time no one dreamed that the sacrilegious foreigners and marauding coolies would ever rush through its courts, plundering and destroying as they went. Its vicinity had been chosen on account of the safety it was supposed to afford, but to me it was always a menace, after the revelations of that first year; grim tales of cruelty floated over the walls to us, and when I became the proud mother of little Britishers I was always haunted

by the fear that they would be spirited away and lost to me for ever in the silent, populous labyrinth beyond the trees.

There was no opening anywhere in the high, thick wall between, and to enter the Park we had to go out and round by several streets. This seemed a waste of time to our students, young Englishmen fresh from home and accustomed to European directness of outlook. Their quarters had a second storey, the only one existing in the compound at that date; and looking down, day after day, over the dividing wall, they secretly resolved to make a shorter way through to the pleasant spaces beyond. They were very quiet about it, and the first we heard of their bold attempt was when a deputation of infuriated Palace officials arrived to protest against what they called a shocking and insulting outrage. It was some time before the astonished Minister could find out what they were talking about, but when they insisted on being conducted to the northernmost corner of the dividing wall he was inclined to agree with them. A fine large hole had been knocked through it, the sacred green tiles were scattered in every direction, and the students could step directly from their own front yard into the Imperial Park. The officials went away mollified, having received profound apologies; what the students received remained a secret between them and the Chief, but they walked delicately and were very silent for a long time afterwards.

Towards the end of the year we learnt that the young Emperor was seriously ill with small-pox, one of the constant scourges of the vast, ill-kept city. He was just eighteen, poor boy, and had been married two years earlier to a bride a good deal younger than himself,

From a painting by Melby in the possession of the author

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an event which had been hailed with joy all over the Flowery Kingdom, but which had not much added to his personal happiness, I believe, although his always invisible young Empress was a model of good manners, and submission to her mother-in-law, the chief requisite for a wife, "the stupid person of the inner chamber," as her husband has to call her if obliged to derogate from his dignity so far as to mention her at all.

The Emperor T'ung-Chih was almost as invisible as his Empress, but from time to time he was carried abroad in his wonderful curtained palanquin, and accidental glimpses were obtained of his countenance. One of these was vouchsafed to our friend Everard on the occasion of the Emperor's visiting the tombs of his ancestors in the Eastern Hills. The arrangements for this journey were exceedingly Chinese. The road lay over some forty miles of desolate country, sparsely inhabited by the poorest class of his subjects. Nothing was to be seen except tumbledown huts, millet stubble, and a desert of dust. It would never do for the Imperial gaze to rest on anything so poverty-stricken and abased, so a long array of sham villages was built on either side of the road—things of lath and paper that, seen through the inner blind of the palanquin, would look solid enough to house the fat and smiling population selected and imported from the more favoured districts. Trees and plants sprang up in a night, shops were opened—it was a "décor de théâtre" forty miles long. Mr. Everard managed to secrete himself in one of the stage cottages, and was rewarded by the Emperor's actually pushing aside his blind and looking out at that point. Far from seeming delighted at the evidences of his people's prosperity, he showed a sad and sallow countenance, all

wrinkled up in disgust and perplexity. His life was one long struggle with his terrific mother, the Dowager Empress who governed China for so many years. She had not been his father's Empress to start with, but was a concubine raised to Imperial rank on becoming the mother of a son destined to reign, and the original or real Empress, who was less fortunate, was her obedient shadow and echo in all things, a gentle, yielding woman quite unfit to cope with the ambitious tyrant whom fate bestowed on her for a colleague.

Two years before our arrival a third Empress had been created in the person of a wife for the Emperor. For years past some hundreds of young girls, daughters of Manchu Bannermen of various ranks, had been receiving training and education in the Palace in order that when His Majesty should arrive at the marriageable age—sixteen—one of them might be chosen for his bride. A woman in China has no rank except that of her husband, and the only condition necessary was that the new Empress should belong to the privileged tribes of the Bannermen, the descendants of the soldiers who had helped in the Manchu invasion which resulted in the eviction of the rightful but quite effete rulers, the Ming Emperors, and the establishment of the Manchu dynasty in China in the middle of the seventeenth century. The finest flower of this carefully nursed maidenhood, Ahluta, having been selected to wear the crown, twenty-one secondary wives and a number of concubines (Sir Robert Douglas puts it at eighty-one, but Palace talk called it three hundred) were chosen for the Harem. It was said in Peking that eight hundred little girls had been living under the Empress's eyes with this possible destiny in view, but I never learnt what became of the five hundred

or so who were rejected. Numbers really did not matter in that city within a city ; the charming American woman artist who has given such a delightful account of her unique experiences while living there, to paint the Dowager Empress's portrait, told me that four hundred attendants were told off for her private use alone.

Before the wedding the bride was sent back to her father's house, to be conducted thence to the Palace with great state, at the moment indicated as the most fortunate by the soothsayers, the moment of midnight on the 16th of October, 1872.

Report said that the young Empress was a very sweet girl ; she would have to be in those surroundings. It is doubtful whether she ever spoke above her breath either in her husband's presence or that of her two powerful mothers-in-law ; but one hopes that the poor little thing had some moments of natural happiness among her flowers and her maids before the end came. The Emperor had had one or two bitter quarrels with the Dowager Empress, which had become public property, and there was a general feeling that he was developing a will of his own, the last thing that lady desired. What we, living so near the Palace, had reason to be pretty certain of, was that he was already dead when his illness was first announced, and his flowery proclamation entreating the Dowagers to assume the Regency published. The world was given bulletins of his condition, varying artistically so as to keep up the illusion, and at last, on the 12th of January, 1875, when the succession had been decided upon, his mourning subjects were informed of his demise.

Whether assisted or merely accepted, it came very conveniently for the Dowager Empress's taste. She

intended to be Regent again as she had been during her lamented son's minority ; but in order to accomplish this, quite three weeks had to be devoted to a palace intrigue, involving Heaven only knows what crimes and bribery, in order that the rightful heir might be set aside. He was the son of the deceased monarch's eldest uncle, and a fine intelligent young man, who would at once have assumed personal control in matters of government, so he was disqualified, and a baby seven months old, the son of the seventh Prince, put in his place. When this was accomplished, and a submissive nation had obediently hailed the baby's accession, the Dowager Empress turned her attention to her son's widow, who was about to become a mother. Should her infant prove to be a boy, the other little fellow would have to resign, and the Empress Ahluta would necessarily become Regent till her son grew up. Such a contretemps was not to be thought of: the child might be a girl ; but the resolute Dowager would take no chances, and her daughter-in-law was condemned to die before its birth.

When informed of the order to commit suicide, she said that she would not contest it. The form suggested being poison, she asked that it might be prepared in her favourite white cup ornamented with birds and peach-blossoms. This was done, and she drank the fatal draught and expired, having fulfilled the highest Chinese ideal of widowed womanhood, self-inflicted death after the decease of her lord. From that moment the Dowager Empress reigned alone.

I have often been profoundly puzzled by the accounts of this remarkable woman, and have nursed a theory, which has been usually laughed to scorn, that she died

during the Boxer rebellion, her place being instantly filled and her character assumed by another woman whom she had trained for the purpose. She was counted as fifty years old when her son died, and her mode of life was scarcely calculated to prolong that blessing for thirty years longer. I do not know whether it is true that she was unduly fond of Sam-shu; but I can answer for her constant practice of sitting up till daylight playing cards, and for her furious outbursts of temper, during which she acted like an insane person. Her unfortunate Ministers had to witness these when they were not the objects of them, and they were quite frank in describing them to us. One morning a very powerful dignitary came to interview the Chief, in a condition of such evident collapse that the latter hastened to offer him restoratives. When these had taken effect the visitor apologized for giving inconvenience, and explained his trouble.

"I am indeed very much shaken," he said, "for I have just passed through a most painful experience. Having been commanded to attend on Her Majesty this morning, I arrived at the Palace [I omit the glorifying Chinese terms he used] at four o'clock as usual, that being the most convenient hour for her, when her card game is over and she is about to retire to rest. If the game is not over I wait, lying on my face on the other side of the screen, for of course I never behold Her Majesty's countenance. I have sometimes had to lie there for hours. It is an honourable duty, and I do not complain. But this morning there was much trouble behind the screen. Her Majesty was very angry with one of her maids. She commanded the eunuchs to beat her to death. It took a long time. I was watched;

I could not show my feelings. I did not dare to stop my ears. The girl's shrieks were terrible, but more terrible were the epithets and abuse which Her Majesty poured out upon her as she watched her die. When it was over, it was again some time before she could speak to me. The corpse was on the other side of the screen when Her Majesty condescended to address me. I could find no words. I was as one dead myself."[1]

The Dowager Empress was passionate, dissipated, and elderly in 1875. Women who had relations at Court whispered that she was shrivelled and bent. No power on earth would have induced her to humble her pride by permitting her photograph to be taken. Yet, five years ago, I was shown a photograph of the Dowager Empress surrounded by her ladies. The portrait was that of a stout, serene-looking woman of about forty years of age. That alone would prove nothing, for, if it were thought politic to publish a photograph of the Empress, any Court lady or even a person of humbler position would be ordered to assume an appropriate costume and pose for it; but the testimony of Miss Kerr, the artist who recently lived for several months in the Palace and came into almost daily contact with the Empress, was utterly irreconcilable with the former data about her. This lady told me that the redoubtable Dowager was a smooth-faced, placid person who, from her appearance, might be between forty-five and fifty years old; that she was extraordinarily gentle and kind in manner, full of real consideration for others, and most decorous and regular in her methods of life. On learning that Miss Kerr had no mother, she exclaimed, "Ah, poor child! Then I must be a mother

[1] As no steel is allowed to be drawn in the Palace all executions there were carried out in the same manner, *i.e.* by beating.

to you!" and in every way that she could think of she carried out her promise. One delicate attention which I think Miss Kerr did not describe in her book was that of providing her with warm clothing for the severe Peking winter. The young artist was summoned to one of the private apartments, and found it spread from end to end with valuable furs. The Empress was making a selection from them, but she wished the future owner to exercise her own taste also. Then one of Miss Kerr's foreign dresses was secretly abstracted from her wardrobe, the shape copied, and a few days later a wonderful garment in softest silk, lined throughout with fur, was brought to her to put on. One innovation had been made. The Empress noticed that, in painting, she required freedom for her arms, so the loose fur-lined sleeves were made detachable, to be buttoned on or removed at will. The Princesses, of whom there were several in the Palace, appeared perfectly devoted to the Empress, and were treated by her with motherly affection, joining her in planning comforts and pleasures for the American guest. The only thing they disapproved of in the latter was the fair colour of her hair, and she told me that every pretty wile was used to persuade or trick her into dyeing it black.

It was impossible to reconcile this description of the Empress Dowager, and of the happy, harmonious life in her family, with what I learnt over thirty years ago. The transformation of age to comparative youth, and of violence and cruelty to womanly sweetness, remains one of the eternal secrets of the Palace. A year or two before the Empress's death I was told that she had become much interested in Christian Science! Perhaps some of the adepts of that comfortably pagan creed turned their

attention to her beforehand, and, on the principle of "Lucus a non lucendo," worked her conversion and rejuvenation by strenuous thought messages sent from their garish tabernacles in New York to the shadowy, golden recesses of the Palace in Peking!

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CHAPTER XXV

SOCIAL LIFE IN PEKING

Winter in Peking—Lady Wade—Sisters of Charity—An unwelcome addition, a scandal, and a quarrel—"Papa" Brenier fails as a peacemaker—M. de Prat's experiences with journalistic envoys—Perrico swears eternal enmity to his Chief—Our world splits in two—A duel imminent—A little bullet and a touching reconciliation—Eau dentifrice as a restorative—M. Brenier is saved from committing homicide—The Margary tragedy—A sad day in Peking—Protestation to the ten-headed Ministry—My husband invited to go to Yunnan to investigate the outrage—I behave very badly—Sir Thomas Wade goes to Tientsin—Meets Li-Hung-Chang and settles terms of the Chefu Convention.

DURING the autumn a few venturesome travellers found their way to Peking, but early in December the ice closed the Gulf of Pechili, the steamers no longer came to Tientsin, and we knew that we were cut off from the outside world till the spring. The mails came and went laboriously overland in mule-carts, taking, in favourable circumstances, thirty days to cover the nine hundred miles between us and Shanghai, and a good deal more when, as not infrequently happened, some province was in rebellion and unsafe to pass through, thus necessitating a lengthy détour. Our one commercial traveller, the thrice welcome envoy of Lane and Crawford in Shanghai, got away with his pack on the last steamer, and then the foreign community set about the serious business of the winter, amusement. We were fairly certain that there

would be no massacres or tragedies till the next year's warm weather set in, for the Chinese is a nice tame creature in the cold season, easy enough to get on with. In the summer, when three or four months of burning heat have parched the land and fired his blood, he wants, naturally enough, to kill somebody, and the poor missionary is the only thing at hand that he can attack with the certainty of being backed up and protected by his own local authorities. Should any one be called upon to suffer for the result, the real criminal can always buy a substitute, some poor man willing to sell his head to provide for his family; for although outside that circle the ordinary Chinese recognizes no responsibilities, within it he can set an edifying example as a hero and a martyr.

Except for one or two Heads of Missions, who were usually engaged in extracting indemnities and apologies for the last crop of outrages, there was very little for anybody to do between December and April; and, tiny as the society was, it kept the ball rolling quite cheerily for four or five months. Everybody dined everybody else solemnly till the stores began to run short, for every atom of grocery and all the necessities of a civilized table had to come from Shanghai, or—and most people preferred this method—from Europe. The arrival of dozens of huge cases twice a year from the Civil Service or the Army and Navy Stores was one of our great excitements. There was much secrecy about working out the lists from the fat catalogues beforehand, and quite fierce rivalry between housekeepers to outdo each other in a fine display of European dainties. Towards Easter we grew more humble, and one glanced anxiously at the fast emptying shelves, wondering whether one

dared give a dinner-party without asparagus, green peas, truffles, foie gras, or fondants? The cooks were artists. There were three or four of them who were practically bonded to the different Legations, and treasured accordingly. They had been trained by a departed Frenchman, but they could not make cabbage and potatoes—the only vegetables in the market for all those months—into "primeurs" to be offered to guests!

The funny thing about all this entertaining was that each family in our compound, including the bachelor Second Secretaries, felt obliged to invite all the rest just so many times in the season. Our bungalows were scattered about the place, none more than a stone's throw distant from another; but with the true English instinct for privacy, each was its owner's castle, and we sent each other cards of invitation as gravely as if we had been living in Mayfair. There was quite a hierarchy on that bit of British ground; the two Services, Diplomatic and Consular, were freely represented, and fell foul of each other periodically in the inevitable way, but, and I think this very creditable, I do not remember a single quarrel among the women. Nobody could have quarrelled with Mrs. Wade; she was everything that the wife of an official in the East should be, thoroughly and fundamentally British, cheery, kind, intelligent, a woman who never made a mistake. Her husband was much older than she, and told me that he had fallen in love with her when she was a little girl, and had asked her to marry him as soon as she was old enough. He had a great sense of humour, and told me one day, chuckling with delight, that he had had a passage of arms with his second little boy, aged four, I think, at that time. "Ti-Ti" (all the children in the

place were only known by their Chinese names) had been naughty, and his father had said to him reproachfully, "Aren't you sorry to see Mamma and Papa look so sad about you?" The little man had turned on him furiously. "You—and Mamma? *My Mamma* is a beautiful young lady, and you are an ugly old gentleman!"

But Mrs. Wade, as she was still, for the Chief did not get his knighthood till the next year, left us all too soon, he promising to follow her and her children to England as speedily as possible, and I, the last comer, as wife of the Secretary of Legation, stepped into her place so far as doing the honours went; and at first I found it rather a strenuous undertaking, and, I fear, gave some dissatisfaction to Hugh's compatriots. I was not English at heart as yet, and found myself much more in sympathy with the French and Russians than with my neighbours in the compound; there were three youngish married women there, but we had not a single idea in common, and I turned gladly to people who came from my own cosmopolitan atmosphere. As in my childhood, so now, two of my greatest friends and supporters were elderly men: one, the Comte de Rochechouart, the French Minister; and a friend of my home days, General de Raasloff, who was acting as Danish Minister to China and Japan, and who, to my joy, stayed in Peking through my first winter there.

Rochechouart was a typical French aristocrat of the most conservative kind. Like so many other Gallic nobles, he claimed descent from Mélusine, the mermaid-fairy, who, to account for her extremely numerous posterity, must have had as many children as the old lady who lived in a shoe. My friend's shield bore

two undulating lines meant to indicate waves, with this proud motto: "Avant que la mer fut au monde, Rochechouart portait les ondes."

As all the Catholic Missions were, as they still are even in these degenerate days, under French protection, occupation never failed him. I remember meeting at his house a French priest who had lived and worked alone for thirty years in the interior of China. He could scarcely speak French any more. He was dressed in the dignified costume of a Chinese gentleman, and I never knew how reverent-looking a skull-cap and pigtail could be till I saw these ornaments on him, for he had the face of a saint and the manners of a monarch. He could not say enough about the goodness and intelligence of his flock. I asked whether it was not a terrible trial to be cut off from all he had known and loved in the world, and he replied with a real gleam in his eyes: "But my people are all I know and love! I am not happy away from them. I hope to go back to them immediately!"

It was Rochechouart who took me to pay my first visit to the "Pei-Tang," the great Catholic Cathedral, close to which the Sisters of Charity had their school and orphanage. It was most charming to see the well-known white "cornettes" moving about among the crowds of little Chinese boys and girls, picked up for the most part from rubbish heaps in the streets. The Sisters themselves did not go out on this ever-fruitful quest, but entrusted it to their helpers and to the "bons Chrétiens" belonging to the congregation. One of these had just made a rescue when I arrived, two poor twin babies, only a few hours old, their poor naked little bodies, still covered with dust and grime, curled round each other in one of the baskets used for horse feed. There were two hundred

children in the house already, but the good Sisters were rejoicing over the last recruits, who, as soon as they had been fed and washed, would be comfortably clothed, baptized, and put to bed in the huge airy dormitory where scores of other forsaken little ones were nursed and cherished by good Chinese women. The older ones filled the school and playing courts, and as they came to years of discretion, the boys were taught trades, and Christian husbands found for the girls, who, the Sisters told me, were very faithful in bringing their own children back to the school and in maintaining the right atmosphere in their homes.

As for the atmosphere of the place itself, it was precisely what I have found it all the world over in those blessed ménages, calm, sunny, pure, and beautiful through and through. I have been in and out of them year after year in China and Japan, in South America, in Italy and England, and everywhere it is the same. No feeling of any nationality but the Celestial one enters there; the great hive of work and prayer opens its heart to Heaven at four in the morning, and sends every thought and action thither till the last bell rings at nine at night. Poverty in those houses is so lovely that one wonders who could ever be attracted by wealth, humility so exalted that the born Duchess regards the peasant "Sœur Servante" as an angel whose instructions it is an honour to carry out, whose wishes have but to be guessed at to be fulfilled; and no one is ever permitted to suggest that the life involves sacrifices. "It's not we who have the hard times, my dear," said a holy and very Irish daughter of St. Vincent to me once. "It is you poor people in the world! Sure, what with one thing and another, it's nothing but troubles and tempta-

tions ye have—make the most of them, for yours is the grand opportunity of gaining merit!"

We had a grand bazaar for the Sisters, at which everybody spent generously, and none more than the staff of the French Legation. But "ces braves messieurs," as their grateful protégées at the Pei-Tang called them, were extremely debonair in private life, and kept up the spirits of our small society most gallantly. They gave a fancy-dress ball, I remember, at which Rochechouart appeared as a Marmiton, his towering height looking very funny in the white cap and apron, while he brandished a huge wooden spoon as a sign of office. The Secretary of Legation was the Marquis de Roquette, another Faubourg St. Germainois, the gayest, dearest, most sentimental and most amusing creature who ever wandered into the Far East. With him we acted comedies—for I signalized my accession to authority by at once arranging a pretty theatre in our Legation—danced and laughed and recited poetry, and shed sympathetic tears over his numerous hopeless attachments. It was after Rochechouart had been replaced by M. Brenier, a man of very different calibre, that the arrival of a new couple afforded us what we had been lacking hitherto, an opening for exciting scandal and grounds for thrilling quarrels with the Russians and Americans!

After as much reflection as one can give to a Society problem at that cheerful age, I forsook the Russians, who had been my first friends, and threw in my lot with the opposing faction. The question centred, of course, round the newly-arrived lady. The East is always regarded as the Diplomatic laundry, so one had reason to be careful of any one whose antecedents seemed doubtful. The imprudent official and the unacceptable dame are given

four or five years out there, while people at home have time to forget their previous adventures. Some of those I knew became edifying examples of decorum and goodness; and in that case one was only too glad to make friends with them. My dear mother had given me a sound piece of advice on this subject: "Other women's past is no business of yours. If, when you meet them, they are decently married and trying to be respectable, treat them as you would anybody else. But *watch* them, and at the first symptom of backsliding drop their acquaintance. It is only the repentant sinner whom we are bound to receive."

Madame X——'s appearance and atmosphere, the perfumes she used and the gowns she wore, would have made it impossible for me to bow to her in Europe; but this was Peking, and I thought time and the climate would chasten externals. So I returned her visit, and waited for developments, Madame X—— in the meantime finding supporters among some of the other ladies of the Legations.

However, that has nothing to do with a comedy which ended near enough to a tragedy to frighten us all. Our dear Rochechouart had departed, and M. Brenier, his successor, having left his own wife and daughters in Europe, was anxious to keep up the dignity of his establishment, and, above all things, avoid having a scandal break out there. He was a stout, benevolent old gentleman, with a rather unctuous manner and a naughty twinkle in his eye, which went very funnily with his little preachments about Christian charity and harmony and the bad end a young woman would come to who set up her judgment against that of her elders. The young woman was myself, and I had seen enough to make

me determined to strike Madame X——'s name off my visiting list, and "Papa Brenier," as we called him, preached to deaf ears. Although it looked as if I were in a hopeless minority, my position was really a very strong one, for the British Legation was the place where things happened—dances, theatricals, picnics, and all the rest of it. All the amusing men were on my side, and I had a staunch ally in an enchanting little firebrand of a woman whom they all adored. Her husband was the Spanish Secretary of Legation, she was the daughter of a German mediatised Prince ; they had knocked about the European world as none of our other colleagues had done, so Madame de Prat and I fell into each other's arms at once. My husband found hers very good company. Arthur Nicolson, who had lately come out from Berlin, Roquette, and a good many others cast in their lot with us, and a very cheery clique was formed which could leave the bores to sulk outside at will.

From the first moment De Prat came to loggerheads with his Chief. I am afraid he quite refused to take him seriously, having, as he confided to us, had so many weird persons installed over him in that capacity by a too democratic Government that his sense of official values was quite blunted. He had been Chargé d'Affaires in one or two European posts, notably in Brussels during the reign of a shaky Liberal Ministry in Madrid, and he declared that they sent him as chiefs all the newspaper editors who threatened to give trouble at home. Wild of eye and strange of speech, the journalist would stalk into the Chancery with a soft hat drawn down over his eyes, a large cloak thrown picturesquely over one shoulder, and announce himself as the new Envoy. When the cloak came off it usually revealed a flowing red tie and long

hair curling over a democratically grubby collar. The new arrival had to be gently told that what might be the height of elegance in the Asturias (two or three came from that remote province) would not pass in Brussels. He was lured to take a bath, coaxed to visit a tailor, and held firmly down at the hair-cutter's till he began to look a little more like other people. Then poor De Prat had to accompany him to Court and pilot him over his first steps into society. His career there lasted a few weeks—once a few months—and then he either threw up the job in disgust, or his place was wanted for another man and he was recalled.

Of course De Prat was exaggerating wildly; he had the exuberant Latin imagination and flow of speech; but there was a good deal of truth in it all, and his Chief in Peking was in some respects not very far removed from the category of those he described. This man had been thought guilty of some rudeness to Madame de Prat because she had refused to know Madame X——; she had taken fierce umbrage. "Perrico" had sworn eternal enmity against the offender, and was prepared to run him through on the first occasion; the Minister apparently sent home an unfavourable report about the Secretary, and perhaps ordered him away from Tientsin to Peking, to await the confirmation of his doom there. As he had no shadow of authority to issue such an order, De Prat refused to obey. The Belgian Legation had been offered him as a residence, and there he entrenched himself till the spring should decide matters between him and his Chief. Thus the winter shut down on us that year, my tiny world divided against itself, but all the fun remaining on my side of the barrier.

A month or two later the explosion came. Nicolson rushed into our house one morning asking for Hugh. I saw by his face that something serious had happened, and, Hugh fortunately being at the Chancery, I insisted on having the whole story before it was taken to him. My wrath knew no bounds when I dragged from Nicolson the fact that he came as a messenger from De Prat to ask my husband to act as his second in a duel with España the next day. Hugh sauntered in before it had exhausted itself, and was very much inclined to consent. Anything in the nature of a fight appealed to him irresistibly. But my representations prevailed. I saw but too clearly how injurious to him it would be to be mixed up in a "Lateiner" scandal of this kind, and, very regretfully, he declined the honour. De Prat took it all in good part and found another second, and that evening we dined with him and his wife, who was beside herself with excitement and anxiety. Other sympathizers were there of course, and Madame de Prat, divided between anger and tears, gave us her view of things in torrents of eloquence. She was a most attractive woman, with a delicate little face, and a mane of crinkly red hair, which she wore usually in one huge plait hanging down her back. It was tossed fiercely about when she got excited, and, describing España's insult, exclaimed, "Cela à *moi*! fille de gentilhomme!" She was immensely proud of her semi-royal birth, and used to flush indignantly when Nicolson teased her about the number of soldiers her father had contributed to the German army. "Two, was it not?" "Two, indeed!" she would cry. "Three and a half! I have told you that several times already."

When we arrived at her house the night before the

duel, we found "Perrico" in bed, suffering from a vulgar visitation but too common in Peking, boils. He was propped up with pillows, and very jolly; the folding doors between the dining-room and the bedroom were wide open, and he could not only take part in the conversation, but pick out his favourite dishes, over each of which there was a battle, as his wife wanted him to have nothing but soup, and he called aloud for venison, foie gras, and all the other dainties of the winter table. In the interval of scolding about these, Madame de Prat would burst into tears, declaring that this was his last night on earth—that that inhuman monster España had insisted on pistols, had sworn that the conflict should be to the death, and that when dinner-time came round again she would be a desolate widow. "And I shall have to marry again!" she confided to me. "I have always told Perrico that I should! I don't want to; I shall hate to do it; but at my age, when one has red hair, one can't wander round the world alone; it is not respectable. Oh dear! oh dear! my heart will break!" Then, snatching at a plate which the servant was carrying towards the bed, she cried, "For goodness' sake, don't eat that spiced game, Perrico! You will have fever and your hand will tremble to-morrow!"

To-morrow came, and found all in order for the conflict. Monsieur Brenier had placed his compound at the disposal of the combatants, and had insisted on watching over Madame de Prat in his own study till fate should decide the result. News of the quarrel had got abroad, and the Chinese of the district had climbed the wall and were sitting on top of it to see the show. Perrico, very pale but "très digne," stalked to his place, and exchanged bows and scowls with his adversary, while

the seconds arranged matters, and examined and loaded the weapons before handing them to their principals. I think they had got them as far away from one another as they could, and both men were shocking bad marksmen, for a perfect fusillade of shots rang out before Perrico, looking down by chance, noticed a little trickle of blood on his trouser leg.

"I am wounded!" he exclaimed, dropping the pistol from his hand. España flung his own away and rushed forward, crying, "Oh, my poor friend!" and the next moment the two men were locked in each other's arms, sobbing and weeping in the joy of reconciliation. If the Latins are children, they are at least very generous ones.

Things had not gone quite so well in M. Brenier's study, where I am sure Madame de Prat was in much greater danger of meeting a violent death than was her husband in the courtyard. At the sound of the first shot she had fainted away, and Papa Brenier, looking round wildly for a restorative, was discovered trying to pour the contents of a large bottle of Doctor Pierre's eau dentrifrice down her throat. The friend who stopped this attempted homicide found something more appropriate, and she recovered in time to be included in the general reconciliation, her late foe swearing that she was an adorable woman, and that dear Perrico was the bravest of men, and that he was their friend for ever.

I am afraid that he did not quite live up to his protestations, for a little later Perrico was recalled to Europe and put "en disponibilité" for a long time. When the De Prats and Roquette went down the Pei-Ho I mourned the loss of three people who had brightened life into a continual comedy.

It had had its more serious sides all along, for the dénouement just described did not occur during my first year in Peking. That was signalized in March 1875, by the arrival of a piece of very bad news, the murder of poor Mr. Margary, a popular young Consular official, in the distant province of Yunnan. An expedition under the command of Colonel Browne had been sent from India viâ Burma to open commercial relations with Yunnan, the arrangement having been sanctioned by the recently deceased Emperor. The Chinese were particularly bitter against foreigners just then, although, as usual, the Government pretended to be all that was friendly and sincere. Mr. Wade, who belonged to the Sir Harry Parkes school of Diplomatists, was bent on making the strength of the British position in China clear, and conceived the idea of sending two of his own men, under the safe-conduct of the Chinese Government, right across the country to meet the travellers from India. The long and arduous journey by mule-cart and boat, of over a thousand miles through hostile country, the greater part of which had never been traversed by a foreigner before, presented very serious difficulties and dangers. Mr. Wade thought he had minimized the latter by his terrible threats of what would happen should the Government guarantee be violated; but it seems strange that a man of such brilliant intelligence, familiar with every twist of the Chinese mind, should have imagined that the Tsungli-Yamen would really hold itself responsible for what would take place at the other end of the ravelled, inchoate Empire. Unhappily he did, and Mr. Margary, who was an excellent Chinese scholar, set out with his pockets full of passports and red-sealed safe-conducts,

and a little escort of Chinese soldiers to take care of him.

He reached Bhamo, within the Burmese frontier, without accidents, and I remember Mr. Wade's jubilant satisfaction on learning that he had met Colonel Browne there; the return journey would be safe enough, for Colonel Browne had a large party and they were well armed. He deemed it prudent, however, to ascertain the temper of the people, and Mr. Margary undertook to do this, going a day's journey or so ahead with his own little escort. Perhaps his first success had made him careless about necessary precautions; perhaps the Chinese were in the mood of the proverb which Italians apply to an unwelcome guest, "Buon viaggio all' andare—accidenti al tornare!" ("Good journey for departure — sudden death if you return!") No one ever knew precisely what happened, but the ill-fated Englishman was amiably received and entertained by the Magistrate at Manwyne, the first town on the Chinese side of the frontier; the next day he was invited to a picnic at some mineral springs in the vicinity, and, just as he reached the spot, was set upon and killed by an infuriated mob, the treacherous Magistrate evidently authorizing the act, while his own escort not only did not interfere, but, it was rumoured, took part in his murder. Simultaneously with this outrage, a large, well-organized force of troops attacked Colonel Browne's party, which, though it did not suffer, being able to defend itself, at once retreated to Bhamo.

It was a very sad day in Peking when the news reached Mr. Wade, and I do not think that he ever forgave himself for the results of his rashness. But he resolved that the perfidious Chinese should never forget them either.

Mr. Margary's monument took many years in building, but when at last completed was a sufficiently magnificent one. The opening of some thirteen new ports to British commerce, and the establishment of a permanent Chinese Legation in London, were concessions directly due to the pressure brought to bear on the authorities in consequence of his death. But they fought hard. Six months after the tragedy the ten-headed Board of Ministers for Foreign Affairs replied to all Sir Thomas Wade's representations that they had got no information from the scene of the outrage, and consequently could not satisfy his demand for punishment of the criminals. Day after day all through those months I used to watch our Chief forming up his procession to start for the Tsungli-Yamen: my husband, Grosvenor, Mayers (the Chinese Secretary), and the entire Staff of the Legation, down to the last-arrived student interpreter, together with Sergeant Crack and the other mounted constables, accompanied him, for the times required a display of force and dignity. When they were all in the saddle the Chief, preceded by the "Tingchai" and one or two more Chinese riders, would put himself at their head, and I shall never forget the quaint appearance he made seated on his favourite little black pony, his sad, stern face shaded by an extra tall top-hat as an emblem of office, while he firmly upheld a huge white umbrella to protect himself from the burning sun.

He often came to me for a cup of tea on his return, and mourned the wasted hours spent in "listening to the same lie from ten different mouths." At last he took matters into his own hands, and insisted on sending a commission of inquiry on his own account into Yunnan, the British official to be accompanied by a Chinese one who was to be personally responsible for his safety

and the sincerity of the inquiry. The Tsungli-Yamen employed every wile of opposition and deceit to frustrate this intention, and, when forced to yield, named a Chinese Commissioner of such low rank that Sir Thomas Wade refused to accept him in that capacity. More struggles ensued, but at last an apparently satisfactory nomination was made ; and then the good Chief and I had one of our various little quarrels, for he had made up his mind that the British Commissioner was to be Hugh Fraser, the man next to himself in official rank, and one whose steely intrepidity and persistence could be depended upon to obtain such results as were possible. I have always been rather a weak-minded person, but when driven to it I can fight for my own. Hugh would have gone like a bird, but I utterly refused to have him run the horrid risks which we all knew attended the venture. I should have gone mad with anxiety in those long months of suspense. I believe I behaved very badly, but I carried my point, and dear, good Grosvenor took on the job instead. I think his fiancée, Sophy Williams, the daughter of the great Cinologue Doctor Williams, wanted to kill me ; but she was only engaged, I was married—a very different thing—and there was our small boy to think of as well. Grosvenor went to Yunnan and did everything that man could do, but he obtained very little satisfaction. The witnesses were all bought or intimidated beforehand by the Viceroy, a man of the worst kind of character, who by his persistent shielding of the criminals made it evident that he was the chief author of the outrage.

Grosvenor returned alive, and that was something to be thankful for, but redress seemed as far off as ever ; and at last Sir Thomas Wade resolved to signify his displeasure by withdrawing from Peking himself, leaving

my husband to superintend the Legation and fight the Tsungli-Yamen, while he entrenched himself at Chefu. Things were in a most unsettled state in Peking, and the feeling against foreigners ran very high. I remember as we were riding out one day hearing a man who was scowling at us say, as Nero said of the Christians, "I wish all these foreign devils had one head, that I might cut it off!" Sir Thomas apprehended trouble, and wanted to take the women and children of the compound away to Chefu, where a British gunboat was in attendance, before it should break out. Two of us refused to move. Our doctor had recently married, and his bride, a typical English girl, who had scarcely been ten miles beyond the suburbs of London before she came to the East, was for the moment wrapped up in the task of making her new home an exact copy of the Sydenham villa she had left behind her. When the Chief explained his fears that a rush might at any moment be made on the compound, and a repetition of the Tientsin horrors ensue, she drew herself up to her full height, and pointed to her dazzling new drawing-room carpet, exclaiming proudly: "Do you expect me to leave that to be trampled upon by dirty Chinese? No, Sir Thomas! I may be killed, but I will defend my property!"

Deeply discouraged by her obstinacy, the Head of Affairs came over to me. I remember I was sitting on my verandah, which was filled from end to end by white dwarf rose-trees in full bloom; delicate blinds of woven grass shut out the glare, and I listened very incredulously to the depressing prophecies. When I found that Hugh was to remain in Peking, I would not hear of going away. If there was trouble ahead, it seemed better to see it through together. He did not quite take the Chief's gloomy view of the situation; and the event proved that

From a photograph

HUGH FRASER

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he was right, for nothing unpleasant happened to us. Sir Thomas Wade's action, however, made a profound impression on the Chinese authorities, and, after more months of stormy negotiation and delay, they at last appointed their greatest statesman, Li-Hung-Chang, to settle with him the terms of the arrangement, so advantageous both to Great Britain and China, known to history as the Chefu Convention.

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CHAPTER XXVI

SUMMERS IN THE WESTERN HILLS

Birth of my eldest son—Chinese gardeners—Moli-Hua and precious tea—My introduction to the mimosa—An old book—"The Perfume of the Rainbow"—Life in the Western Hills—My first summer in a temple—Our old runner—Waiting for the rain—The Temple of the Black Dragon—The demons' parlour serves as a day nursery—Buddhism and Taoism—Buddha's shrine—The little room and the forgotten dead—Chinese attitude towards the deceased—Unpleasant surprises and their cause—Two canny policemen and an inconvenient corpse—"I've had enough of this!"—A burial party—A Britisher gets a bad fright—A calm lady and a clever robber—A supposed practical joke—An impossible situation and three denuded young men.

I HAD been married just a year when my son came into the world, in the hottest summer known in the north of China in fifty years. The spring had lasted about a week. On the last Sunday in April we were still making fires and wearing furs; eight days later the sun was too hot to be pleasant, the double windows had all been replaced by bamboo shades, and we women were flaunting round in muslin frocks and straw hats. At first the change seemed pleasant enough, but as the heat increased steadily day by day, and not a drop of rain was due to fall before the 20th of August or thereabouts, the conduct of life became rather a difficult matter. The country all round Peking had reverted from black mud to grey dust, not a breath of air played

over the parched compound, and one's only consolation lay in the masses of flowering shrubs which the gardeners brought to sell, and with which every corner of the house and verandah and the carefully shaded little garden were filled. The Chinese are great at the gentle art of cultivating flowers, and they have varieties of a beauty and a fragrance I have never seen elsewhere. Their jessamine, the Moli-Hua, has a thick, velvety white petal like orange blossom, and gives out such an overpowering sweetness that a few buds floating in a cup of water will scent the entire house. This is the blossom used to scent those fine teas which Mandarins send one as a present; the first tiny leaf, picked at the most favourable moment, prepared with a care which amounts to worship, packed in a case covered with white silk and thickly ornamented with figures padded out in relief dressed in all the hues of the rainbow, a little gilt lock and key and gilt handles completing the whole—tea that once tasted leaves a life-long desire to obtain it again. But what pleased me even more than the Moli-Hua was the Quei-Hua, a redundant kind of *Olea fragrans*, which was brought me in great branches, the dark, pointed leaves sticking out from the tasselling of pale yellow blossom that hid the stem from view and shook out golden powders and heavenly perfumes in every breeze that ruffled the fluffy, feathery mass. There was the mimosa, too, and I made its acquaintance in one of those moments that tell most in life and are remembered ever after.

Having read all my own books, I wandered one summer morning into the student interpreters' library in search of distraction. It was a dark old Chinese apartment, on the upper floor of their quarters, with a big

lattice window looking out over the Imperial Park. Strange ancient books lined the shelves, musty tomes in leather bindings, most of them so unconnected with any possible requirements of the students that they were very seldom disturbed. When the Legation was first established in Peking, many years before, a sum of five hundred pounds had been appropriated to furnishing a good working library for the young men who had to pass examinations in Chinese before obtaining posts in the Consular Service. There the forethought of the authorities ceased. The money was handed over *en bloc* to a London second-hand bookseller, and he at once cleared his shelves of all the stuff that he could not dispose of at home. But some few good works found their way in, among them Pinkerton's "Voyages," a mine of delight to me, and two huge volumes which I discovered on that particular summer morning, an original edition of Bacon's "Essays," with beautiful gem-black print, wide margins, and bindings so heavy that I could just carry one at a time. I got them down on the table by the window, and opened at the page where he begins to talk about the Perfume of the Rainbow. The mere phrase went to my head. It described something which I had felt must exist, but had never heard defined before. Of course the Rainbow must have a perfume—of unimaginable sweetness, for were not its melting, jewel-like tints the very essence of flowers and dew floating back to their source, sun and rain? I got the big book up in both arms and brought it home, where it nearly covered my little writing-table by the French window that stood open to the garden. Something very faint and sweet that I had never smelt before was being wafted into the room. I stepped out—and there, waving above

my head, was the very flower of the Rainbow itself. The big mimosa-tree had suddenly opened into bloom; each plume of dark green foliage had thrown up a sunburst of feathery rays, rose and white and orange, as delicate and transparent as humming-birds' wings in motion, and shedding that perfume that Bacon had dreamed and written of, but never breathed.

Only in North China have I seen the mimosa attain to such size and flower in such perfection. There was an enormous tree in the ravine below our temple in the Western Hills, and for many weeks it was my delight to creep out on to the terrace at dawn and wait for the first low sunbeams to turn that mass of ethereal blossom into a rainbow cloud caught on the steep hillside. There were many hardships in life in Peking—the limitations, the sickening squalor of the streets, the famishing home-sickness for Europe and one's own people—but the summer in the hills went far to make up for it all. I think it was to Sir Harry Parkes that we Britishers owed the privilege of renting five or six Buddhist temples, scattered up and down on the distant line of hills, to which one turned longing eyes when the city became a furnace of evil smells, floored with scorching dust and roofed in by a heavy grey heat-cloud that lay on it like a pall. In my first year there this unexpectedly broke in July, sending down torrents of rain, refreshing at the moment but leaving very unhealthy effects.

I was scarcely well enough to travel, but our good doctor insisted on my going away, and arranged a covered litter on which I could lie comfortably, while the baby and his nurses were packed into a mule-cart, the sides carefully padded with quilts to prevent his head

from too sharp contact with them in the jolting over the roughest of rough roads. The cooks and "boys," provisions, bedding, etc., filled a long string of these carts, of which indeed I saw very little on the way, for although they could travel through the flooded ruts cut from six to ten feet into the ground which did duty for a highway, my bearers preferred to cut across country on the dykes which separated the miles and miles of millet fields, and which, at any rate, were above water-mark. It had only rained for one day, but the plain was almost submerged. Hugh told me that two of his friends had once had a narrow escape from drowning in the course of some journey. When they left Peking in the morning not a drop of rain had fallen for some eleven months, nor did the downpour begin till they were within about an hour of their destination. But then the skies were opened and the road became a river. The Mongol ponies scrambled up the banks, and, though having to swim in some places, made their way to the foot of the hills, where Hugh, who was going to one of the higher temples, took the upward path. His companions had to travel on the level a little way farther to the north, and their temple was scarcely raised above the plain. Before they reached it their horses were drowned, they had to swim to the place, and after shouting desperately for help were hauled up over the parapet with ropes. It had been raining for less than three hours!

My own experience involved no such dangers, and afforded me much amusement. I had four bearers, and two extra ones trotted alongside, slipping in under the poles when their turn came with such smoothness that I felt no jar at all. They *ran* the whole eighteen miles,

and laughed and joked all the time, in spite of the stern reproofs of the old Tingchai who had me in charge. In the intervals of conversation they would snatch up one of the little white melons growing in patches in the fields, and eat it, rind and all, as if it had been bread-and-butter. I was not feeling very strong, and the sight made me shiver—it looked as if they must die of cholera before dark! But the Chinese is first cousin to the ostrich in digestive capacity, and a life-long course of buried cabbage and embalmed eggs puts the lower classes out of danger in that way.

My first home in the Western Hills was in the topmost Temple of all, Hsiang-Chieh-Ssu, a grey and ancient retreat, whence silent Buddhist monks had once looked out over the misty plain to the world they had renounced. It was an eerie place, reached by some hundred of steps and surrounded by a high wall like that of a fortress, for which indeed I think it had served in troublous times. Within were several courts, and the last one of all was cut into the natural rock, which made thirty-foot walls on three sides of it. Hsiang-Chieh-Ssu was not a fashionable resort for pilgrims; it was a good deal behind the times in that way, and its poor priest contented himself with a single hall of worship, a cavern of dim gods and tarnished gold and ever-burning joss-sticks, into which I was much too frightened to penetrate. He had a couple of tiny cells to live in, and all the rest he gave up to us for a trifling sum, which ensured him quite a year of comfort and good living according to his own standards.

That was a terrible summer all over China, the intense heat not lessened but made more intolerable by floods of rain. Everything exuded moisture, one's garments were

wringing with it, the walls too damp to touch. The servants even collapsed, the baby's cow went dry, there was no keeping food sweet, even on the ice brought daily from the city by an old runner who came out in the morning and returned at night with orders for the next day. It seemed incredible that an old man could sustain such fatigue, and I insisted on supplying him with a beast to ride, but after trying it he said he preferred his own feet, and I imagine his family sold the donkey for their own benefit. Only the "scissor-grinders," the loudest-throated insect in the world, flourished, filling a great tree by the forest gate with such a tempest of discordant sound that it drowned any attempt at conversation near it. Also the little grey lizards had a grand time; they crawled over the walls of my bedroom all summer, snapping up the mosquitoes and growing fat on them.

All this does not sound very attractive, I admit, but the greenness, the silence, the vast spaces around, were very consoling and restful after the trials of summer in the city. Every day I used to sit on the top step of the long stone ladder that fell away from the front gate and watch the rain coming up from the distant Gulf of Pechili, sweeping on in a thick grey cloud covering from view the farther hills and plain, then Peking itself, then every foot of intervening country between us and the capital. It took about three-quarters of an hour to reach us after that, sweeping on like an impenetrable blanket let down from the sky, growing whiter as it approached. It sent on no forerunners; I could watch in dryness and safety till the lower flight of steps had disappeared and the blinding curtain was within fifty yards of my face. Then, with a roar, it flung itself upon us; the courts became lakes, the grinning monsters on

the gables so many waterspouts, for the space of an hour or more. Then it ceased, the streams drained away down the hill, tea was served on the terrace, and all was safe till one o'clock the next day.

We only passed one summer at Hsiang-Chieh-Ssu. The next year we established ourselves at Lung-Wang-Tang, the Temple of the Black Dragon, about half-way down the slope, and a very much pleasanter residence than the other. It stood on a raised plateau of its own, with deep ravines and running streams on either side. The buildings covered quite four acres of ground, reaching back from the great terrace above the front parapet through a series of marble-paved courts, level at first, then built into the side of the hill, one above another, connected by flights of steps, each with its isolated set of apartments, private and remote, shaded by broad verandahs and old trees, so that the dwellers on one were in no danger of being disturbed by those above or below them. The courts on the level followed the invariable plan of the Buddhist temples, the halls facing the east being reserved for worship, and the two sides devoted to spacious rooms for guests and pilgrims, hospitality to these being one of the former obligations of the monks.

The great shrine of all, the supposed home of the Black Dragon King, the god of rain, was half-way down the precipice on the southern side, a huge square tank deep in the rock and supplied by a natural spring and surrounded by broad paved walks. At the back, looking towards the east, was the sacred Hall, where his image, a fearful-looking combination of man, monster, and demon, towered up in the semi-darkness surrounded by a perfect riot of Taoist symbolism—worship gone mad ; and a contiguous chamber housed his bodyguard, the demons

of thunder and lightning, flood and pestilence, a score of more than life-sized figures, each more terrifying than the last, goblins of every bad dream that ever visited sinful man, some blood-red in countenance, some sickly green, some black, all showing ravening tusks and furious eyes, and brandishing their special weapons of destruction in their taloned fingers. I went in and glanced at them once or twice and fled, feeling that I should never forget the sight; but the Chinese amahs had no superstitious prejudices at all.

The demons' parlour was the coolest spot in Lung-Wang-Tang, and the least haunted by scorpions and mosquitoes, so they calmly turned it into a day nursery, where my fair-haired English babies played happily and took their siesta on the grass mats in perfect comfort, their faithful nurses sitting beside them with fans to keep the flies away, and talking all the time in a low monotone about their own interesting affairs. The stream rushed over its stones far below in the ravine, and on the side towards the larger buildings staircases climbed up the rock and gave access to a shady well-terraced set of rooms built into the face of it and connected by a covered way with the higher level. These were the night nurseries. The general servants' quarters crept away along the crest of the ravine—I never penetrated to them. The bachelors who were staying with us were installed on the upper terrace; a couple of escort constables on the highest of all, to watch over our safety. My husband chose an apartment in the second court for himself, and two beautiful little rooms jutting out on the front parapet and commanding every point of the superb view were made over to me. The exquisitely carved lattice windows on one side commanded the nursery establishment, and on the

other looked into the beautiful, marble-paved, red-pillared enclosure where the pink and white lotus grew in the fountains, and whole beds of the snowy "Belladonna" lily bloomed all summer to deck the altars in the shrines.

Lung-Wang-Tang afforded a fine example of the Chinese popular religion, a medley of Buddhism and Taoism elbowing each other in the same precincts, the lower form colouring the higher to a great extent and attracting all the attention of pilgrims, while the Bonze, a lazy, uninteresting man, carried out his duties as a Buddhist priest (chiefly by proxy) and never entered the fane of the Tao deities at all. Dust and darkness reigned in the immense hall where Buddha, golden and gigantic, sat on the lotus throne in eternal contemplation. Even at midday it was difficult at first to distinguish anything else inside those dark incense-laden spaces. After one's eyes had forgotten the sunshine and white marble of the court, one could make out the wide altar which served him for a pedestal, covered with strange objects, some of which looked like lacquered skulls, others musical instruments that might have given out sound ages ago, but were dumb and unstrung now; there were lotus sceptres of tarnished gold, painted drums and sacred fans and fly-brushes with coral and ivory handles—all the bric-à-brac of a dead worship that had once been rich and dear to the human heart. From the carved and painted beams that melted away into impenetrable twilight overhead hung weird, shapeless trophies of embroidered silk, tasselled and lacquered shields that looked like huge tortoises, and now made homes for the bats who used to drop suddenly from them and send me flying away.

The one pretty thing in the place was a little side altar, where the offerings were laid out every morning with

devout care by the little acolyte, who had to ring the bronze bell at four o'clock and then go in and say most of the priest's prayers for him. He was a good boy and never scamped his duties. I was an early riser too, and could hear him pattering on in a quick monotone for quite an hour after I had been roused by the deep musical tones of the bell. When he had finished the prayers, he came out and gathered handfuls of the white lilies, and sat down on the porch to arrange them closely and symmetrically in the white porcelain bowls. Then he disappeared, and returned with two plates of little square cakes, made, I think, of honey and flour, which were laid on the altar between the cups of lilies. A handful of fresh joss-sticks was stuck into the upright holder and lighted. When the thin blue spirals of smoke began to curl up the acolyte's duties were over, and he went off to see about breakfast for his master. At sunset one light was placed at Buddha's feet to burn till dawn. The doors were always left open, and if one had occasion to cross the court in the dark hours, as often happened to me, the effect was weird in the extreme. The lamp lay deep in a great bowl, so that one could not see the flame, but its soft radiance was cast up in the impassive gold face that seemed to be looking down at it, and glowed through the transparent paper that lined the whole latticed front of the building, turning it into a thing of ghostly beauty which it took some courage to approach.

There was that in the chamber to the left of it which tried the nerves still more, two ponderous and much decayed Chinese coffins, the contents of which it was thought better not to investigate. They probably contained the bones of dead benefactors, deposited in that sacred place until a fortunate day for burial should be

indicated by the astrologers—and then forgotten in true Chinese fashion. These people's treatment of the dead is all in harmony—if one may use such a paradoxical expression—with their strangely contradictory methods on other points. The human body, as such, is a thing for which, dead or alive, they have no respect whatever. The hideous barbarity of their treatment of criminals or enemies finds its counterpart in their cynical neglect of the dead, if the latter be a beggar or a stranger. Corpses used to lie for days in the highways between the Manchu and Chinese city, when I went riding about in Peking. The man beside me would suddenly lay his hand on my bridle and turn my pony's head the other way, saying, "Don't look—follow me," and break into a canter. Probably the chief reason for these unpleasant surprises lay in the absurd regulation which obliged the first person who touched a dead body to become responsible for the expenses of the interment; but one would have thought that, under the cover of darkness, some charitable soul would find means to move the poor corpse to one side and throw a few spadefuls of earth over it. But the Chinese made callousness a fine art, and the very police were not above using a dead body to extort a squeeze, as we learned one winter at some cost to our fortitude.

The weather was unusually bitter, and at such times the sad beggar army—that awful collection of the lepers and the maimed, the naked and the starving, which haunted the streets—was apt to be thinned out by an extra degree of frost. The year before one poor wretch had sunk down and died in the night before the Legation gate, and Sir Thomas Wade had paid the policeman at the station near by to take him away and bury him—a charitable act which the wily policeman did not forget.

The next year, Sir Thomas having gone home and my stiff-necked husband being in charge, Sergeant Crack opened the gate on a snowy Christmas morning, and found a body, frozen stiff, lying right across it. He at once summoned the police, who came, all smiles, to be paid to take it away. But the canny Yorkshireman had seen in the snow the traces of booted footsteps and a heavy object dragged between them all the way from the police hut, a short distance away, and the place where the thing lay. It was clear that the guardians of the peace had brought it from some distance to earn a gratuity for them, and the sergeant gruffly ordered them to remove it, and, turning his back on them, withdrew. This was unfortunate, for they disregarded his commands, and some ladies coming to the chapel in the grounds for morning service, nearly fainted away at the gruesome sight that met their eyes. Very sulkily the police yielded to force and took it away before church was over; but the next morning it lay once more before our gate. And the next, and the next. The policemen got it as far as their hut each time they were summoned, and brought it back at night. Hugh, though furious, would have paid, I think, to stop the nuisance, but Sergeant Crack implored him not to give way. "There'll be one of them poor wretches put there every night till the spring, sir, if you do. I'll settle the policemen if you'll leave it to me." And he did. The next morning brought the same unwelcome visitor, and then the sergeant called another member of the force to his aid. "Come along o' me, Herring. I've had enough of this. You and me will bury this corpse here and now."

So they climbed down the side of the canal, dug a good deep hole in the frozen mud, and dropped the dead

man into it. It was a high honour for that nameless wreck to be buried by those sturdy Britishers; but the sergeant, who knew the Chinese character all too well, feared that, if he left the task to native underlings, they would come to an understanding with the policemen, and the obsequies not prove final at all.

But these strange people had other ways with their deceased, which, though supposed to testify to veneration, ended in revolting neglect. Some member of the family died, and, after being put into his coffin, was deposited in the survivor's field until money could be found to pay the Bonze to name a fortunate day for the funeral, joss-stick and gold paper, representing money, being burnt at intervals beside the coffin to appease the departed spirit. Then would come a bad year, or the tax-farmers pounced on the mourner's last coin, and the funeral had to be postponed. Somebody else died, and there were two coffins waiting to be put under ground—sometimes three. As time passed all idea of proper burial was forgotten; and the result was that, in cantering across country, one's pony might at any moment put his foot on rotten planks and scatter human remains in every direction. I had one or two adventures of this kind, which left ghastly pictures on my memory, and—to return to the starting-point of this long digression—made me very shy of the little room in the north-west corner of my courtyard in Lung-Wang-Tang.

One of the former Legation Staff had had a very bad night in just such an apartment. Having ridden all day, he arrived after dark at a lonely temple and asked for hospitality. The Bonze conducted him to a room which contained several large chests; but the Englishman was too tired to notice them particularly, and

threw himself down on the "kang" to sleep. The priest had furnished him with a lantern, which he left burning. Waking in the dead of night, he found himself staring at the dark wooden cases against the opposite wall—and with a sudden shiver realized that they were coffins! As he looked at them another horrible certainty came to him—the lid of one was being slowly and stealthily raised from within. Inch by inch it went up, and then four bony fingers appeared over the edge of the box. With a leap he was off the kang and flying out of the door; but there was a crash behind him, and heavy footsteps pounded in pursuit.

Glancing back as he ran, he got one glimpse of a hideous face and figure. The next moment he was out of the courtyard, had reached the shed where he had left his horse, and dashed away into the night. He never even knew the name of the temple. It is a pity to spoil such a fine bogey story by explanation, but I cannot help thinking that the spook was only a thief. These marauders were something of a pest to foreigners in the temples; for the many pavilions, staircases, and shrines offered splendid hiding-places, and most of the rooms had no doors, a bamboo matting hung over the entrance being the only defence. The Wades had lived in Lung-Wang-Tang in past summers; and Lady Wade, sleeping in the room I inhabited, woke up one night to find a man creeping across the floor on hands and knees. Being a calm sort of person, she did not think it worth while to raise an alarm; she merely threw her fan at him, watched him scuttle out under the door-blind, and turned over and went to sleep. But when the sun rose there was lamentation and mourning in another room, where the stout old English nurse, Mrs. Burtwhistle, had snored

happily through the night. Her entire wardrobe had disappeared.

The student interpreters, who had a temple to themselves near the foot of the hill, were honoured by a similar visitation. Three of them were living there together, and one fine July morning Number One discovered that every article of clothing had been removed from his apartment. He pondered for a minute or two, and came to the conclusion that Number Two and Number Three had played a practical joke on him. Well, they should not have the satisfaction of knowing that he had missed anything. He would stay in bed, that was all! They could believe he was ill if they liked. As the hours went on it struck him that the place was very silent that morning. Questioning his servant, who appeared to have noticed nothing unusual, he was told that the other gentlemen seemed tired, like his illustrious self. They also were still in bed. When the gong sounded for the twelve o'clock breakfast, three furious young men met—in pyjamas—on the terrace and began to hurl volleys of abuse at one another. This suddenly ceased as each took in the details of his companions' costumes. Nobody had anything to put on, and every one of the three had imagined that the others had carried off his garments. Although the loss of a summer's outfit is a serious matter, it was all so funny that they had to laugh. Imploring appeals for clothing were sent to the other temples near, and the messengers brought back enough borrowed coats and trousers to liberate the poor victims from their uncomfortable dilemma before dark.

CHAPTER XXVII

FRIENDS, ADVENTURES, AND EXCURSIONS

Friendliness of the country people—Veneration for our doctor—Feeding bottles much prized—How not to run a dispensary—A pearl necklace and strained relations—Sir Robert Hart—His admirable management of the Chinese and their Customs Revenues—His character and tastes—More Temple life—An alarming visitor—Mr. Carles and I take a walk and meet a Voice—How a Lama monk employed his vacation—Visit to the Lama Temple—Pilgrims come to pray to the Black Dragon—Dawn on my terrace—My walks on the city wall—A homesick Princess and a loving thought—Autumn rides—The ruined Summer Palace—China's everlasting fate.

ONE of the really pleasant sides of life in the hills was the friendliness of the country people around us. We were detested in the city and never passed outside the compound without being made to feel it, but in the hills we were regarded as benefactors, spending the only money ever seen there, and, crowning qualification, having with us much of the time our good Doctor Bushell, who could talk to the people of their ailments in excellent vernacular and gave them medicines free of charge. This fact alone set him quite apart from other human beings in their estimation, such divine folly as giving something for nothing not entering into Chinese methods. What they most coveted was quinine, for their work in the malarial millet fields during the rainy season produced obstinate chills and fever, and

many of the poor creatures were terribly emaciated and of a ghastly pallor. It was funny, however, to see them gravely insist on the Doctor's feeling the pulse in both wrists, and then lay first one leg and then the other on the table so that the same test might be applied to their ankles.

As a possession an Allen & Hanbury's feeding bottle was much prized by the women. They would fill it with some strange compound of rice-water and syrup, and the little brown babies hugged it appreciatively. The orders for the Legation dispensary got a good deal mixed sometimes, and we were apt to receive an enormous cargo of one thing and very little of others. In 1875 there was a superfluity of feeding bottles, probably suggested by the rapid increase of British babies which had prevailed of late years. Including the Chief, five members of the Staff had young families, and also some of the escort men, and the feeding bottles came out literally by the gross. Before that, somebody had asked for iodine, and it came in tubs which lined the dispensary walls for years, and was used for every conceivable purpose from dyeing wood to staining the ponies' hoofs.

Sir Thomas Wade was very princely in his ideas, and in making out his own orders for groceries, etc., disdained any quantity under the twelve dozen. When he left I bought the contents of his storeroom as they stood, and was constrained to leave them there till exhausted because I could not begin to house them in my own. Some of his ventures turned out badly. Somebody having suggested that one or two mirrors would brighten up the dark-panelled drawing-rooms of his residence, he at once sent for twelve, all ten feet high. By the time they had been brought over the road from Tientsin these

were broken up into several hundreds, of which the larger bits were used where possible and the smaller ones pounced upon by the servants for their wives and families. The Chinese looking-glass is a two-inch disc set in metal, and only capable of giving wildly distorted reflections. But it is much prized by the women, and always kept in an embroidered case to preserve its surface.

One year, when we arrived at the Temple, I found that I had not even one of these with me—no looking-glass of any kind! Fortunately I was wearing my hair short, like a boy's, and could see to divide it in the glass covering a photograph of my mother, a property from which I was never parted. My favourite mirror was a beautiful Venetian one which was not to be carried about in carts. When I married, my dear godfather, Mr. Hooker, sent me a generous cheque towards a pearl necklace on which I had set my heart, but I spent it all on the mirror—one of those framed in flowers and foliage that seem blown out of sea-foam and Venetian sunsets—and forgot all about the pearls, continuing to wear some strings of Roman ones which had been favourites of my girlhood. The modest ornament very nearly caused a rupture of diplomatic relations in the Far East between Great Britain and Russia. I never imagined that any one would take my beads for anything but what they were, but the rest of my outfit lent itself to such an error, and Madame de B——, not to be outdone by a Secretary's wife, gave her husband no peace until he provided her with precisely the same number of rows of veritable pearls. All might have gone well had I not wandered into her drawing-room one day and found her threading them.

"You lucky woman!" I exclaimed. "Those are beauties indeed!"

"Yes," she replied. "I told my husband that they must be just like yours. They are quite as good, aren't they?"

I went off into convulsions of laughter. When I recovered enough to explain that mine were only Roman ones, the little lady's chagrin was profound, and relations were quite strained for a while afterwards, though I did all I could to propitiate her. Another lady, I was told, had ruled me out of her favour because my Brussels flounces were deeper than hers, and I did not want to lose another friend just then.

Madame de B—— was a close neighbour, but the Harts were geographically a long way from the Legation. Theirs was the one other important foreign establishment in the Tartar City, that of the Imperial Customs where Sir Robert Hart reigned sole autocrat of the admirable service he had created, and dispensed much hospitality to fellow-exiles from the other end of the town. It was an undertaking to reach him in time for dinner on a winter evening. My palanquin, a really beautiful object for which Hugh had sent to Canton, was brought out, to the joy of the servants, who believed that its green silk covering and shining silver ornaments betokened some mysteriously elevated rank in its mistress. The three windows were carefully closed to keep out the cold, the fringed blinds drawn across them, a boiling-hot foot-warmer placed on the floor, and a huge fox robe spread out for me to sit on. Then came the wrapping up of my own rather delicate self. By the time that was completed I could hardly get into the conveyance; an ample "Ma-Qua" coat much longer than I was

tall, lined with white fox-cub fur two inches thick, was wrapped over the European evening cloak of ordinary wear, high fox-lined boots were pulled over my satin slippers, the amah enveloped my head in a cloud of lace, and somebody lifted me in, for I could scarcely stand, much less walk, in such a costume. My husband, as warmly swaddled, got into his mule-cart, the Ting-chai sprang into the saddle and cracked his riding-whip, the bearers broke into their rapid even trot, and away we went through labyrinths of slippery, filthy streets, traversing the four miles that separated us from our destination in about an hour.

There all was brightness and good cheer. Lady Hart returned to England a few months after my arrival, but her husband kept open house just the same, assisted in doing the honours by the pretty wife of one of his subordinates. As these were all of his personal selection, ruthlessly sent about their business if they did not come up to his standard, and very generously provided for when they did, one met only very intelligent and well-informed men, of all the prominent nationalities. There was no favouritism beyond that accorded to merit in the Customs Service. It included Russians and Danes, French, Italians, Germans ; these had the same chance of promotion with the English and Americans, and, under the Chief's firm guidance, worked together in perfect harmony, gathering in such a princely revenue for the Government from the Customs impost that, as later history showed, the authorities, who had never had, or dreamed they could have had, an honest agent in that department, regarded Robert Hart as a kind of demi-god with whom it would be a dangerous folly to quarrel. Many a hard knot he solved for Diplomatists

in China, many a difficulty he was enabled to smooth away by the confidence with which he had inspired his Imperial employers. He was acquainted with every turn of the crafty Chinese mind, arrogant to the point of mania, yet so cowardly that no shift was too mean, no treachery too base, if by its use the horrid trouble of answering an honest question could be put off even for a day. He never lost sight of justice. Devoted heart and soul to the best interests of the country, he did not hesitate to denounce the Government's sins to its face, and was a tower of strength to foreigners in periods of disturbance.

With all this the man's character had the most amiable and child-like sides. His love for music amounted to a passion, and he had taught himself to play the violin quite creditably. In his few hours of recreation he resolutely put up the shutters on all business questions, and gave himself up heartily and joyously to the other side of life. A true Irishman, he loved nothing better than to hear or tell a good story, and used to amuse me immensely by describing the rivalry he had established between his head-cooks. In order to keep up the salutary fear of dismissal he had two, both pupils of the legendary Frenchman, and receiving precisely equal wages. One cooked for him one week and one the next, the unemployed artist jealously watching the other man's concoctions, and straining every nerve to outdo them when his own turn came. The result was something to remember in the way of dinners!

Outside of his work Sir Robert Hart on principle provided for his mind the very lightest literature, amusing French novels being his favourite reading. He told me that he found in these trifles the only complete

relaxation from business worries; he could read them through without a single effort of thought, and forget all about them directly afterwards, and I am convinced his method was a very healthy one, for he got through an incredible amount of work, and he held every detail of his business in his head, as well as the attainments and even the preferences of his great staff of subordinates scattered in every open port in China. For first and last he was kindly, generous, and human, fond of making beautiful presents to his friends, and ever thinking of some little pleasure or comfort that he could invent for them. If he ever reads these pages and feels inclined to resent this halting account of him as indiscreetly personal, he is entreated to remember that it has its source in the warmest gratitude for the many kindnesses he showed me during my years in Peking.

The Russians, as well as other nationalities, had colonies of temples scattered about in the hills, but we all saw so much of each other during the rest of the year that, by tacit consent, summer visiting was not the fashion. We had plenty of occupation to fill our time without it. When my husband became Chargé d'Affaires he transacted all business at the Temple, turning a big two-storeyed gatehouse into a temporary Chancery. Running out there to speak to him one morning, I had an unpleasant surprise. An enormous black serpent had coiled itself round the cross-beam of the gate, its tail hanging down at one end, and its great head at the other. None of the servants would go near it; they believed it was one of the thunder-and-lightning demons, and were frightened when two of the men staying with us roused it to uncoil itself and descend, and then killed it. It measured some four yards, and

was a fierce-looking monster, but Hugh declared it was quite a harmless one. Two or three snakes haunted the terrace. As we sat out there on moonlight nights something would rustle against my skirt, and glide off into the shadows when I screamed—as every woman does, I suppose, at the sight of a snake. There were plenty of poisonous little adders in the ravines, but they never came any nearer, and I was much more scared of the scorpions that crept out of chinks and crevices, and were sometimes found crawling over the beds. The Chinese amahs cut them in two with scissors, this being, they said, the only way to prevent a scorpion from coming to life again. I saw strange creatures in my walks sometimes. One day I stooped to pick up what I thought was a large and very white hen's egg. Somebody caught back my hand in time and kicked the egg, whereupon it put out half a dozen big, black, hairy legs—and the spider crawled away!

We were staying on a little late one year, the year of the bad famine, when our peace began to be disturbed at night by unearthly howls in the ravine which ran far up behind us into the hills, and the groom who took care of our ponies down below told of two wolves who had mangled more than one child in a neighbouring village. Each night the howls came a little nearer till they really got on one's nerves. I had my smallest baby with me in the lonely outstanding pavilion right over the ravine, and what with paper and lattice walls and only a loose blind to close the door, the situation became rather terrifying. The escort men went out with rifles, and spent a couple of days in trying to locate the creatures, but without success. At last one night they seemed to be close upon us, probably attracted by our pretty little cow, but the amahs were so

terrified that they came climbing up to me in the dead of night with all their bedding and the eldest baby, their teeth chattering with fear of the "Liang" (tiger), their general name for any beast of prey. The next day I took the nursery and its cow back to Peking.

One evening before that I had heard another unearthly sound for the first time. I was wandering up the hillside with our dear friend Carles, who afterwards did such good work in Korea, and wrote such a fascinating book about that weird country. We were following a narrow winding path much overarched with trees, when from far above us a strange discordant note, like the loudest string of a contrabasso out of tune, made itself heard, increased in volume without pause or change, and came steadily nearer.

"What on earth is it?" I asked, clutching at my companion's sleeve. "I can't imagine," he replied. "I never heard anything like it before!" We paused in our walk and were staring at the next turn in the path, when there hove in sight a tall, yellow-clothed figure bearing down on us, a bare head and upturned face with a cavernous open mouth, whence proceeded, still without pause or breath, that one roaring volume of sound. On perceiving us, the singer paused and bowed politely. Carles addressed him in classical Chinese, and the gentleman explained that he was a monk of the great Lama Temple in Peking, employing the leisure of his short holiday to practise his "note."

When I visited the Lama Temple afterwards I understood the phrase. An important service was going on, and the place was full of the monks, all sitting on the floor and wearing the conical yellow mitre of ceremony, each contributing to the chant one note only, loud as sturdy

lungs could make it, and continuously sustained without any indication of taking breath.

The Lamas seemed to me to take their religion rather seriously, and they were much respected by the more light-minded Pekingese. All their traditions and some of the monks themselves had come from Thibet, that austere and awful country that hangs between earth and heaven as it were, needlessly jealous of intrusion, for any foreigner who has ever been there would go to the end of the earth rather than return to it again. The Lamas of the Temple in Peking had no particular prejudice against foreigners, so long as the latter showed due respect for the sacred precincts; but one day some of our student interpreters attempted to ride their ponies through the gate, and a storm of indignation broke loose, stones flew through the air, and the intruders just escaped being crushed as the heavy portals were flung together to bar their passage; for the shrine was a famous one, so venerated that pilgrims came all the way from Lhassa to visit it. I met two of them as they approached the gates of the city, and the interpreter told me that they were reaching the goal towards which they must have been walking for years in fulfilment of a terrific vow, for they prostrated themselves on the ground at full length, rose and walked to the point their heads had touched, and again fell down on their faces to measure the next few steps, thus having literally covered that immense distance with their bodies. Their faces were haggard and covered with dust, and wore an expression of such despairing resolve that it wrung the heart. They were bareheaded, clothed in one rough brown garment from which the dust blew in a cloud as they moved, and they carried long Buddhist rosaries which slipped through their emaciated fingers to one

short, ever-repeated prayer—three or four words which my interpreter could not, of course, translate; some forgotten cry of ancient hearts like the "Om Mane Padme Hum!" of the devout pilgrims in Japan. These poor men were frantically in earnest. Whether they were expiating a crime or only seeking "release from the wheel," I am sure their Father and Creator heard their supplication and has long since taken them home.

Altogether life was quite pleasant and amusing in the hills, and I have affectionate memories of the summers spent at the Black Dragon Temple. The pilgrims who came to visit him were quiet and very splendidly dressed people, sometimes a white-bearded patriarch with all his children and grandchildren, men and maids, all much interested in us, and politely anxious to find out all about us. When they had exhausted that subject they went and paid their devotions to the Black Dragon, whose effigy only stood in the shrine, but who was believed to have his home in the invisible depths of the big, dark tank. Apples were thought to be his favourite food, and these were thrown to him if the weather was what his clients desired; but he got no treats if it was bad, and once, when the rain was holding off too long, they took his effigy and ducked it in the pool.

But the pilgrim incursions were rare; we generally enjoyed the most perfect quiet and liberty, and were very close to Nature, of which an American poet said so truly, "Who kisseth this garment's hem shall be healed." Never have I looked on a fairer view than the one that met me as I crept out on my terrace every morning at dawn, the magic virgin hour of the day, when the pure coolness of the night still lingered on the air, not a soul was moving, and the world was mine alone. Leaning

over the parapet, I could gaze across the fifty miles of plain that stretched away to the Eastern Hills and the Pei-Ho, count the sails on the river—in those days my eyes showed me what others could only see through opera glasses—watch the sun come up and turn the plain into one vast stretch of melting rose and blue, lilac and gold, tints blending and changing with every passing minute, while there in the centre lay Peking, the enormous, ancient, wicked city, all "sand and ruin and gold," mysterious, terrifying, full of enemies, yet so alluring to the imagination that it haunts me to this day, and the destruction and desecration worked there of late years have brought a personal pang of indignation and pain.

We had more liberty in those days to visit places of interest than foreigners have enjoyed since, perhaps because at that time it was thought right to show a certain amount of respect for national feeling. Except the Temple of Heaven, which the Emperor entered alone once a year—and where General Gaselee tactfully gave a huge garden party after the Boxer row—there were few shrines or monuments we did not see; and the permission to walk on the wall of the Manchu City (afterwards rescinded) gave us the resource of a splendid lonely promenade sixteen miles long, with a grand view and no beggars in attendance. The top of the wall was some fifty feet broad, smoothly flagged and protected by a breast-high parapet. At each mile of its length flights of steps led up from the Manchu side to the gate, where the guardian, who had orders to admit us, received us gladly for the sake of his little "cumshaw."

There was one point where we always paused in

our walk, to look across the wide space which separated the Manchu from the vast Chinese City which it dominates and excludes; the gates of the former are all closed at sundown, and only a pass or a respectable bribe can gain admittance for the belated wayfarer. Many a scamper we have had to "make" the gate in time, for any altercation there was sure to attract a crowd, and the dwellers in the Chinese City were much more hostile to foreigners than those in the other camp. The two are divided by a waste of shifting yellow sand dunes, through which the canal creeps sluggishly, bearing every wreck and horror imaginable on its tainted surface in summer, turning in winter into a ribbon of black ice, along which much of the traffic of the city was conducted on wooden sleds. But from where we used to pause, beside a half-ruined bastion, we could drop all that from view, and look across to a building perched on the crest of the Chinese City wall, a building which told of a loving thought—the rarest of all suggestions in that land of cruelty and hate. Long ago, I forget how long, an Emperor of China took to his heart a little Mohammedan Princess, brought from far to adorn his harem. She was a real Princess, not a girl of the Mohammedan tribe that has lived, despised and on sufferance, for over a thousand years in the fastnesses of the interior, and scattered its stray units all over the country as well. She was beautiful and winning, and she pined for her own home and her own people. The Emperor loved her too much to send her back, but he thought of one solace for her. She should enjoy the exercise of her religion. No mosque could be erected within the Imperial City, but he had one built high on the wall across the dividing space. A hierophant of the

Prophet was established there, and when he sounded the Muezzin the little Princess could ascend to a bower on the wall and spread her carpet and look towards Mecca, and, joining in his prayers, forget her homesickness for a while. And there the deserted mosque hangs to this day, its graceful structure so suggestive of fairer surroundings and more genial skies that it arrests the attention like some long unheard but familiar tune.

It was only in the winter, when the cold made riding impossible for me, that we haunted the boulevard on the wall; in the bright autumn weather, which lasted five or six weeks and made one pardon the climate during the rest of the year, we made long excursions and saw most of the interesting places between us and the Great Wall. I shall never forget one or two days passed at Yueng-Ming-Yuen, the ruined Summer Palace built for the last of the Ming Emperors by the Jesuits, the wonderful men who were hailed in the Imperial Palace as teachers, architects, astronomers, and mathematicians, and who left behind them such splendid monuments to testify to their ability. Of all these none was more beautiful, even when I saw it, than the vast wooded park where every natural feature had been taken advantage of, and the flowery pavilions lay like clusters of jewels on the turf among the trees and by the side of lovely lakes and streams. Chinese architecture at its best is very stately and beautiful, but this was something more beautiful still, rich, late Renaissance designs, just touched with some of the Oriental exuberance, carried out in colours and materials which only the Orient can produce. Every archway and window of the exquisite buildings was garlanded with Luca della Robbia flowers and fruits tinted to life, with a glaze and a depth that the Florentine potter's

majolica never took on. The keystone of many arches was a great scallop-shell of heavenly blue, the prevailing colour of the tiled walls, and from this the wreaths seemed to burst out into fruit and bloom that one wanted to gather. The little balconies, the deep, ornamented doorways, the high Giulio Romano windows that always look so proud—it was all Italian, beloved, familiar, and, when I saw it, in great part standing yet. The sack and nominal destruction was a just and all too merciful punishment for the crime perpetrated, and that great Englishman Lord Elgin reflected long before fixing on it as a blow struck at the responsible criminal and involving no suffering to his innocent subjects.

One may grieve at the results, but the account of the events which produced them leaves no doubt as to the necessity of signal and instant retribution. I had seen the Board of Punishment, the place where Parkes and his companions were tortured and insulted, and had stood by the grave of Norman, the one who succumbed under his sufferings, and I knew that whatever safety British subjects might enjoy in North China had been bought by Lord Elgin's courage and firmness; but oh, the pity of it all! The lost thought and the ruined beauty seemed so typical of China's everlasting fate—capable of welcoming the best, forfeiting it in the blindness of her pride and cruelty, and then trampling even on its traces in her brutal callousness. The Chinese have done more to destroy Yueng-Ming-Yuen than the Allies did in 1860. Many buildings which were standing when my husband first visited the place had all but disappeared when he took me there. Many a house must have been built and beautified with the pirated material, and no one would even try to stop the marauders, because, in the

eyes of the better class of Chinese, everything which has been touched by the foreigner or the common people of his own country is unclean, desecrated, and quite unfit for further use. After the Boxer troubles, my friend Major Seaman showed the Chinese Ambassador a quantity of valuable objects belonging to the Imperial family which he had bought from looters of the Palace in Peking, and asked him to return them to their owners. But His Excellency held up his hands in horror. "Take them away!" he exclaimed. "They are desecrated, filthy—we never want to see them again!"

CHAPTER XXVIII

MY LAST YEAR IN CHINA

The Temple of the Silver Pines—Journey to the Ming Tombs—Invisible presences—The Great Wall—"The Sorrow of the Sons of Ham"—Wu-San-Kwei and his love story—A Manchu Helen—A merchant's home—"Mother's workbox"—Prince Kung's magnificence outdone by that of Li-Hung-Chang—Pure Mandarin spoken by English children—Difficulties of the language—Li-Hung-Chang—How the Chinese keep warm in winter and cool in summer—Narrow escape of an English officer—The river boat again—A French liner—Italian violets welcome me home.

THE Summer Palace and the hunting park were within easy reach of home, and so was another spot which greatly impressed me, a secluded temple far back in the hills, called, if I remember rightly, Chia-Chieh-Ssu. It stood in a large grove of white pines, a tree that I at least have never seen anywhere else. Its foliage is so dark as to be almost black, the trunk of pure argent white, and very tall and slender. The effect of these ranks on ranks of silver shafts, upholding that deeply dusky canopy over the temple roofs, was wonderfully beautiful. Underfoot the carefully levelled paths were brown and velvety with dust of pine-needles; the gently sloping approaches to the fane, and the broad courtyard, were paved with white marble, deeply sculptured, except on the narrow space where feet must pass; balustrades, smaller shrines in the grove, were all of white marble too,

and lotuses were holding up their great white and rose-coloured chalices from the fountains and tanks. There were no Taoist deformities here ; all was chastened and stately, and the priests who conducted us about seemed to belong to a class much superior to that from which sprang those I had met before. I was grieved to learn that this remote and lovely spot had attracted the unfavourable notice of the foreign troops during the Boxer troubles, and had been completely destroyed.

A much more serious expedition was the journey to the Ming Tombs and the Great Wall. This we undertook in the fine October weather, riding all day and putting up in some temple at night. The servants and provisions always started a little ahead of us in the mule-carts, and travelled with praiseworthy speed, for, though we often cut across country and made only short pauses on the road, they always managed to greet us at our destination, where we found everything prepared for our arrival—hot baths, clean clothes laid out on our own snowy beds, a six-course dinner ready to serve, and, when necessary, the very rooms repapered ! The Chinese servants never ask for orders, never shirk trouble. We had but to say, "We go in such a direction, and the journey will last so many days." After that they did all the rest. The head boy got the necessary funds from the Legation treasurer, converted them into small change,—small only in value, for the hundreds of strings of copper cash nearly filled one cart,—and put mattresses, linen, cooking pots, etc., into three or four others. The "boys" of our companions all came too, and nothing was forgotten, from cigarettes and fans down to reams of clean paper wherewith to renovate dirty walls.

We had travelled some three days when at last we

entered the long, long avenue of sculptured figures which leads to the Tombs. All around us the country was utterly bare and lonely, a desert solitude where the gigantic throned figures had sat for centuries opposite one another, taking scorching sun and winter sleet on the blind, impassive faces, not a whit more human than those of the stone elephants which alternated with them. One had to be silent in that silence of ages. We hardly spoke as we rode by; even our ponies' footfalls were muffled in the thick dust. And when we reached the vast, crimson-pillared halls, bare of figure or ornament, through which the spirits of the great departed may roam at will, something like awe fell upon us, for the very emptiness was a homage to the unseen, and with that the air was so overladen that the presence of sentient flesh and blood seemed an impertinent intrusion, and one bowed oneself out as soon as possible. It was not good to be there.

The Great Wall was the thing I had wanted to see all my life, more for the sake of what it symbolizes than for its own sake. A stone wall wandering up and down hill with towers for milestones is not in itself a very impressive object. True, it comes out of the Eastern horizon and stretches to the Western, but defences have done that in other places, and the grey line on the grey hills would say very little to one's imagination had that not been fired by the knowledge that there is a thousand miles of it—that a thousand sulky-looking towers were once manned with warriors fiercely determined to keep the Manchu invaders out. But the Manchu invaders came, a strong man's passion for one beautiful woman served to establish them in the conquered country, after desolating and very nearly burning its capital to the

ground, and there they are to-day. The sulky watch-towers are all empty now, and the Great Wall only serves as another example of the futility of human resolves. Few incidents in history are so romantic as the story of the last stages of that conquest.

In the year 1642, in the reign of the Emperor T'singcheng, there broke out a more than usually formidable rebellion against his rule in the province of T'hensi about Singan, some six hundred miles to the south-west of the city of Peking; of this rebellion the two leaders were named Chang and Li. Immediately prior to this outbreak the attacks of the Manchus upon Peking, under the leadership of their sovereign or chief, T'sientsung, had been foiled, and they had retreated to the north-east, where lay their own country with its capital, Mukden. After several new attempts to invade China, T'sientsung died at Mukden in 1643, and was succeeded by a regency under Dorgun. In the meantime the rebellion of the Chinese themselves against their ruler had made rapid strides all over the country. Of the two principal leaders, however, the most important and ambitious was undoubtedly Li. Having acquired control over the south-western provinces, this rascal set himself to obtain possession of the city of Peking, and so to ensure for himself the supreme power in the land. The only Imperial garrison that menaced his success was that of Kai-feng that lay upon his flank. This town, however, he subdued by flooding it out with the waters of the Hoang river—better known to the Chinese by its local name of "the Sorrow of the Sons of Ham."

So satisfied for the time being with this success was Li that he proclaimed himself King; at the end of twelve months, however, in 1644, he decided to be an Emperor,

and gave out that his dynasty was to be known as that of the T'ai Shun. And thereupon he set out once more in the direction of Peking the coveted, and presently sat down with his army before it. It was not long before he was able to establish congenial business relations with the disaffected of the inhabitants, with the result that the southern gate was opened to his troops by the officer in command at that point. Hereupon the Emperor hanged himself on a tree [1] in the farther quarter of the city, and Li stepped into the shoes of the defunct monarch.

Promptly the city fathers came to do homage to the new ruler; among them, as Sir Robert Douglas tells us in his delightful history, was a certain Wu, whose son, Wu-Kwei, had been making successful head against the northern enemies of the deceased "Son of Heaven," the Manchus. Wu-San-Kwei had been ordered to fall back on Peking to defend it against Li, but before he could get there he received news of its fate and the Emperor's suicide. Also there reached him simultaneously a letter from his father, who was now a hostage in Li's hands for his son's submission to the new order of things. Wu implored him to come to terms with Li; otherwise, wrote the poor old man, his, Wu's, own life and that of his entire family would certainly be forfeited. Wu-San-Kwei was naturally anxious to save his father's life, and was on the point of continuing towards Peking with the object of making his submission to the usurper, when he learnt of something that made him resolve to endure any sacrifice rather than be reconciled with the arrogant Li.

Among those dearest to him in the capital was a girl named Ch'en Yuan; she had been his slave, a present from

[1] This tree was solemnly condemned for having caused the death of an Emperor, and was loaded with heavy chains as a punishment.

a friend, and in his absence at his post, Ninguan, she had been presented by his father as a peace-offering to one of Li's subordinates. Wu-San-Kwei loved Ch'en Yuan, whose beauty was only equalled by her mental gifts and virtues, and he resolved to get her back or fall in the attempt. So he wrote to his former enemy, the Manchu regent Dorgun, offering his services in seating the Manchu upon the throne of China, if Dorgun would help him to take vengance on Li and repossess himself of the incomparable Ch'en Yuan. Before he could get any answer from Dorgun, however, Wu-San-Kwei was attacked by Li, who had learned of the correspondence in the meantime.

Wu-San-Kwei was entrenched at Han Hai Kwan when Li came up with him. Li had thoughtfully brought old Wu with him to force Wu-San-Kwei to submission by the fear of seeing his father executed as the result of his contumacy. But the son was not to be moved by filial piety, the thought of his Ch'en Yuan steeled his heart; he refused to come to any compromise, and old Wu's head was cut off in sight of the city walls whence Wu-San-Kwei watched the scene, unmoved, among his soldiers. When it was over he marched out at their head and prepared to give battle to his adversary. He was still uncertain of what part the Manchus under Dorgun might or might not decide to take in the struggle.

After fighting for close upon a day, Wu-San-Kwei, greatly outnumbered by his enemy, was being slowly but surely hemmed in on all sides, when, to his boundless delight, a Manchu contingent made its appearance, debouching on the plain from the defiles of the hills behind Han Hai Kwan. At once the newcomers, whose leader had craftily concealed his presence in the neighbour-

hood, flung themselves upon the flank of Li, so that he was caught between two hostile bodies, and pinched until at last he broke and fled. For many miles his defeated legions fled, pursued by the relentless Wu-San-Kwei, until at length they found a temporary shelter in Peking. Having glutted his hatred on Wu's relations, and having sacked the city of all that he could conveniently take away with him, Li set fire to Peking in the manner of the best Oriental traditions, and fled on towards his own country of Shensi. It only remains to be said that he and all his companions were killed by the peasants whom they had plundered of victuals, and that when San-Kwei came up with the remainder of Li's forces, it was to find only that person's corpse surrounded by those of his fellow-rebels. Ch'en Yuan had been amply avenged.

Whether Wu-San-Kwei and she ever came together again is more than I can say ; but it would be a fitting end to their romance.

While Wu was pursuing Li, Dorgun took peaceful possession of Peking and proclaimed the Manchu dynasty that still occupies the throne. Of Wu's further adventurous and highly successful career, lack of space forbids the relation; suffice it to say that he ultimately turned rebel against the dynasty which he himself had helped to establish, and was driven to the fitting exit, according to Chinese ideas, of unsuccessful rebellion in the year 1680—to wit, that of self-destruction. The last we hear of him is that his bones were scattered over the provinces of Yunnan, Szechuan, and Hunan, over which he had ruled in life, practically absolute lord ; so that, as his conqueror, H'anghsi, expressed it, no one should ever be able to say, "This is Wu-San-Kwei."

On the return from the Great Wall we followed

a new route; and I had a very pleasant hour at the home of the chief man of one of the villages, a respectable merchant, who made us welcome in his pretty house, and introduced me to his wife and daughter—quiet, sweet-looking women, much interested in me and my clothes. My Chinese was limited, and none of my masculine companions could be admitted to interpret for me, so we did not get very far in conversation; but we made friends over the older lady's workbox, which supplied the little human touch in the room—a workbox all odds and ends, with bits of treasured baby-toys tucked away in it, just what "Mother's workbox" is all the world over.

The severe seclusion of women among the educated Chinese debarred me from personal acquaintance with their prominent men. The English official would have "lost face" quite hopelessly in their estimation had he permitted them to see his wife. When Cabinet Ministers or other great personages came to the Legation, orders went forth that all the Englishwomen were to stay indoors, and it was only through lowered blinds that I could watch the procession file in—the throng of mounted guards first, then the great man in his gorgeously decked palanquin, and after him the equipages of his staff—glorified mule-carts, with silken-robed drivers, the animals sleek and well-fed, and their harnesses shining with polished metal.

When Prince Kung appeared I think he brought some two hundred people with him; but he was really outdone in general sumptuousness by Li-Hung-Chang, who came several times when I was there, and liked to walk about the compound looking at the bonny English children, and listening to their fluent Chinese

talk. He specially admired the accent of my two-year-old boy, and declared that it was the purest Mandarin he had ever heard, and a pleasure to listen to. The children all learnt Chinese long before they learnt English, and never spoke any other language among themselves or with any one else till they were much bigger ; and they did not make the mistakes into which older people were apt to fall. It was very hard for us to remember the almost infinite number of meanings imparted to the same monosyllable by inflections and aspirates ; and after giving an order one waited with some anxiety to behold the results. These were occasionally startling. When the troops under Lord Elgin were quartered near Peking, a command was sent forth for a hundred sacks of potatoes for the men. Days passed and no potatoes came, although they had been readily obtainable till then. At last the crestfallen messengers returned with six sacks of something that wriggled and did not seem to be potatoes at all. With grovelling apologies the bearers entreated to be forgiven—but really *eels* were terribly scarce !

The doctor's young wife electrified her household soon after her arrival by ordering what she thought was a glass of ice-water. It was a hot morning ; and when the boy stared at her in amazement, she repeated the command, and told him rather sharply to bring it at once—as quickly as he could. He edged out of the room in silence, and five minutes later rushed into the dispensary to inform the doctor that the "Tai-tai" had told him she wanted a "soldier" immediately. That meant one of the escort men ; and such a summons implied that one of the servants had been guilty of a grave misdemeanour, and was to be handed over to

his own Magistrate to be bambooed. No wonder Mrs. Bushell had to wait some time that morning for her glass of water! She had asked for "Ping-Ting" instead of "Ping-Shui."

I was interested enough in Li-Hung-Chang to watch him closely when I had the opportunity. His face was a compendium of all that constitutes statesmanship in his countrymen's estimation—the firmly moulded brow with the bumps of observation so strongly developed, the narrow, astute Asiatic eyes that see everything, but might as well not be there for all they reveal of the owner's thoughts, the aggressive facial angle caused by the sharp high cheek-bones and the inhuman droop of the scornful mouth below; yet all this was so informed with brilliant intelligence that the rest was forgiven for its sake. In manner Li-Hung-Chang was grave and urbane; the men who knew him told me that he would take trouble to make himself agreeable, and always assumed the attitude of deep sympathy with foreigners which was, I think, sincere, in so far as he realized that the time had come when other nations must be counted with, and that it would be well for China to have friends among them. His costume was a delight to me. For as these visits were usually paid in winter, he wore three robes one over the other, of the most delicately tinted silks, one lined with ermine, one with sable, and one with silver fox. His huge sedan chair, all covered with silk, ornamented with silver, and hanging with gold and coral fringes, was lined throughout with the finest sable. The perfectly fitting black velvet boots put nearly an inch of snow-white sole between his foot and the frozen ground; and I do not doubt that in one of those magnificent sleeves was a little metal firebox or "scaldino,"

a favourite luxury with rich and poor in that bitter climate, either when walking abroad or sitting at home in houses which contain no warming apparatus beyond the charcoal furnace under the bed, and perhaps a brazier with a few red coals in it. As a result of this insane system the furnace is often overfilled, and the sleeper runs the risk of asphyxiation or roasting. Our men-servants once or twice narrowly missed killing themselves with the first in their own quarters, where they could do as they liked; and there was a legend that an English officer, breaking his journey at an inn between Tientsin and Peking, had been seen to come bounding out of the courtyard at dead of night, swearing horribly, having waked up to find one side of himself badly scorched.

The natives depend more on clothing than on anything else for keeping up the circulation, and it is funny to see them swell in girth as the cold weather increases, putting on one wadded garment over another till they are as broad as they are long. Then as the spring advances they begin to peel, shedding nearly as many skins as an onion, till they are quite slim again and the garments that remain are the last necessary concession to decency. Except in very remote places they do not strip as the Japanese do, but the labourers and coolies have an ingenious invention in the shape of a stiff basketwork, sleeveless jacket, which is worn under the blue cotton one, and sticks out like a bell, admitting the air and keeping all clinging material away from the skin. Altogether the Chinese costume is far more comfortable and healthy than the Japanese one, with its flagrant shortcomings at ankle and chest, and is also handsomer and more dignified. As for the silks and brocades, they surpass anything the world

produces elsewhere in these degenerate days, tints that strike every note from the faintest to the deepest, blues that one only sees when the sun strikes low on the sea or on the flash of a kingfisher's wing, pinks and lilacs more delicate than the last dream of the after-glow in the Alps, and scarlets that make one's eyes ache and retain through centuries the swimming red of freshly spilt blood. We gathered cases full of the great rolls, and it was not till many years had elapsed after my departure from China that I ever had to buy material for Court trains and ball gowns or welcome presents for friends at home.

It sometimes seemed to me that I should never reach that haven again. The enormous distance and the complete severance from all my own people and old associations had caused me such famishing homesickness that at last it could be borne no longer. Poor Hugh was chained to the spot, having for two years past been Chargé d'Affaires, and having, in Sir Thomas Wade's continuous absence, no alternative but to remain and try to push forward the ratification of the Chefu Convention. My health had suffered much, and I knew that I must breathe my own airs if I was ever to recover it, so in the spring of the fourth year I started down the Pei-Ho with a much bigger fleet than I had taken up it, for what with amahs and our two devoted "boys" (to whom the children were tied by their sashes to prevent their tumbling overboard) we were a very numerous party. A sick friend, Gerald Wellesley of the Customs, took advantage of the convoy, and again we spent five days between those depressing mudbanks of the Pei-Ho. Hugh put us on board a Messageries steamer at Shanghai, and the very first night out we sank a junk and killed one or more of its crew, our French officers and sailors yelling and racing

about like madmen, and all the passengers rushing up and down thinking their last moment had come. I was badly frightened, I confess. I reached the forward deck just in time to see the junk, a pirate one, float away in two pieces on either side of our screw, and a dozen poor wretches struggling in the water. I was truly sorry for them, and a little regretted not having stuck to the safe, dull old P. & O. But I was going home, bringing my two little boys with me, and nothing short of our own total shipwreck could have weighed on my spirits for long!

One morning towards the end of May there came wafting over the sea a perfume I had not smelt for nearly four years, the sweet breath of violets from the coast of Italy. An hour or two later we reached Messina, passed between Scylla and Charybdis, and found ourselves at last in the Mediterranean. The short run farther to Naples was a dream of joy, and when my kind old stepfather came on board to meet me, I was so happy that I had to cry. That night I saw my mother again and slept in my beautiful old room at the Odescalchi, and felt for once that I had nothing more to ask of life.

CHAPTER XXIX

CHANGES IN MY OLD HOME

Changes in Rome—Beginning of the reign of Leo XIII.—His saintly character and great learning—The end of Catholicism proclaimed by its enemies—Destruction of Villa Negroni—The craze for speculation—Downfall of great families—Old friends in trouble—A devout Princess discovers that her ancient home is occupied by worshippers of Satan—Abominable treatment of cloistered nuns—The Duke of Ripalda becomes a mark for the spoilers—Irreparable damage done to the Farnesina Palace—He has to abandon it and the Tiber avenges him—I take a Chinese Christian to see the Holy Father—My second visit to him—His private Mass—The Jubilee year—Immense concourse of pilgrims—A charming sight in St. Peter's—A summer in Siena—A haunted stable—"Thirteen Spannocchis buried under the stairs!"

I FOUND many changes in Rome after my four years of absence. The great and holy Pius IX. had passed away a few months before my return, and there was an empty place in the world of mind and thought where his image had been venerated since my earliest years. His heavy mantle had fallen on the man of all others whom the Church, and therefore the world, needed, Leo XIII., the Saint, the Philosopher, the Fighter, the most brilliant intellect of his day and one of the most truly humble Christians whom the world has ever seen. His little book called "Humility" speaks the very language of Saint Francis; his Encyclicals present in their force and wisdom a medicine for every social and

international evil. When Pius IX. was carried like some dead malefactor to his grave, under cover of darkness which did not protect his corpse from the stones and insults hurled at it by his rabble of enemies, there was rejoicing in the camps of the Philistines all over the world. Instructed and tutored atheism and decrepit heresy, the haters of truth who work in darkness together, Free-masons of the 33rd degree and their brothers the Satanists, all proclaimed the end of Catholicism as a power on earth. And when Leo XIII. passed away, after his glorious Pontificate of over twenty-five years, Catholicism was stronger than it had been for centuries past; every nation, whatever its religion, had learnt to count with it, and kings and rulers had come to be humbly grateful to the Holy Father for the allaying of quarrels and the solution of problems with which they were helpless to cope alone.

But the worldwide religious renaissance which we behold to-day had scarcely begun when I returned to Rome in 1878, and there was much sadness in witnessing the rapidly progressing desecration of holy places and the reckless destruction of beautiful buildings and venerated landmarks. The "Via Nazionale" had cut through the heart of the city from my first home, the Villa Negroni, to the very door of my second one, the Palazzo Odescalchi, viciously twisted so as to sweep away half of the splendid Villa Aldobrandini and all of the small but charming Villa Antonelli. The Romans themselves, wealthy nobles who should have known better, had gone mad with the insane greed of speculation, and the two most beautiful villas in Italy, the Ludovici and the Albani, had been turned into wastes of cheap brick and mortar, abandoned when the inevitable crash came, patched

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up for mean uses afterwards, and standing now as squalid epitaphs of great names and great houses, illustrious through long centuries, crumbled together in the dust. My dear brother described that miserable period of failure in his novel "Don Orsino," but he was too kind-hearted and indulgent to dwell on the wretchedness still so prevalent when he wrote, caused by the universal bankruptcy. I went to visit old friends, people of princely rank and formerly of great domains, and I found them and their numerous children crowded into one tiny corner of their huge palace (all the rest let to any one who would take it), and distracted with anxiety as to how to pay the shoemaker, who had been using very offensive language about his bill that morning.

The case of another well-known family was still worse. Everything they had passed into the hands of their creditors, and the law forbidding any one to sell a single work of art from the galleries and collections made it impossible for them to raise any money on their truly priceless possessions of that kind. The palace in Rome, the great villa outside the walls, their far-reaching estates in the country around, knew them no more. The Prince and Princess and their daughters fled to a provincial town in the north, and lived there for some years in a tiny lodging, with a maid-of-all-work to attend to their wants. But the heaviest blow fell upon them when once, for some reason, they asked permission to revisit a certain suite of rooms in their old home, which, like all the rest, had been let by the people in possession. The evicted owners were devout and sincere Christians at least, and Princess ——, on opening a door, fainted and fell to the floor. The apartment had been turned into a Satanist chapel with its hideous presentment of Lucifer over the

altar, and displayed all the other nameless and obscene paraphernalia of the infernal cult.

In the few convents for women not entirely confiscated, but condemned to extinction by the prohibition to receive any new members, the Government practised a refinement of cruelty by confining the nuns within a small part of their own house and turning the remainder, including the courtyard on which their windows opened, into cavalry barracks. The very chapel was desecrated, and the aged holy women whom I visited and conversed with regarded this as a more terrible calamity than all the rest. Yet what they suffered from the profane and obscene language that assailed their ears, from the blare of bugles, the stamping of horses, and the miasma of stables, can never be described. Each nun was allowed ten sous (fivepence) a day for maintenance ; the remainder of their revenue, to which each inmate had contributed her dowry since the House was founded, was appropriated by the Government and never spoken of again. It was impossible to buy material for clothing out of this beggarly dole, and I saw habits that should have been of cloth carried out in sackcloth, and that, although of course immaculately clean, so patched and darned that it seemed impossible that it should hold together any longer.

The poor Religious were the silent victims of this diabolic spite, and had only words of forgiveness and charity for their persecutors. It was very different with the people of the great world, like the Duke of Ripalda, the devout Spanish Grandee who was a familiar and beloved figure in society. He had made his home in the Farnesina, Raphael's Farnesina, the little gem of a palace built on the farther bank of the Tiber, opposite

its big brother, the Palazzo Farnese, with which Michelangelo designed to unite it by a bridge, which, somehow, never got built. Everybody knows the beautiful frescoes in the chief hall illustrating the story of Psyche and Cupid, and the one lunette in which Michelangelo, wandering over from the Farnese to have a talk with his friend Sanzio and finding him absent, left a visiting card in the shape of a grand, rough head on one of the still empty spaces, a souvenir which Raphael, with the humility of one great artist towards another, refused to efface for any painting of his own.

The smaller palace added to those treasures the attraction of charming gardens overhanging the Tiber, and of a position which, though easily accessible, was ideally quiet and isolated. But it belonged to the King of Naples; he had let it for ninety-nine years to a sympathizer of the Papacy, so it was found necessary to broaden the river's bed at that particular point. Half the gardens were cut away; the foundations of the palace were tampered with till the walls began to sink, and Raphael's frescoes were defaced with cracks. Art-lovers protested; Ripalda stormed in vain, and finally gave up his lovely but no longer habitable home, reaping only the bitter satisfaction of learning, when next the Tiber rose, that the breach in the banks had been made in the wrong place, and the flood had done greater damage than for many years before.

It was a relief to turn away from the vandalism going on in the city, and enter the peaceful, changeless halls of the Vatican. I had brought with me from Peking a devout Chinese Catholic who had been with me a long time, and on whose faithfulness to the children I could rely. "Nei-Ma" (Chinese for "Nou-

nou") was resolved to show no surprise at all the new things she saw from the moment we landed at Naples. The sight of a locomotive filled her with apprehension, and when she found herself in the train for the first time, being swept on at a pace beyond her wildest dreams, she turned sickly white instead of healthy brown, and maintained a demeanour of gravity befitting a person facing the imminent danger of sudden death. I asked her what she thought of it all, and her only reply was a calm "Very nice." But when I took her to see the Holy Father her enthusiasm knew no bounds. He was deeply interested in his child from the East, and the rest of her life was glorified by the remembrance of his kind words and fatherly blessing. Our introducer was an old friend, dear Father Smith of the Irish College, a zealous and holy man, and one of the learned archæologians of the day. When in reply to the Pope's question I had to say that I was myself still only a Catholic at heart, he turned to my conductor and exclaimed reproachfully, "Father Smith, how is it possible that you have left this poor lamb outside the fold for so long? Bring her in! Bring her in!"

I had an opportunity to remind him of this when I had finally taken the step from which cowardly human considerations had kept me back ever since I could reason at all. I had been honoured with an invitation to attend his private Mass, and found myself, with a few other persons, at eight o'clock one summer morning, in the quiet apartment which he inhabited on an upper floor of the Vatican. No sounds from without penetrated across the vast pile of the building which lay between us and the city; the gardens below were all in bloom; the Pope's guests entered noiselessly, and took their

places on the kneeling-stools ranged before two wide folding doors still closed. The hush of prayer was over us all in that beautiful upper room, for all were to receive Communion from the Holy Father's hands. As the hour sounded from the sweet-toned bells of St. Peter's, the doors were pushed back and revealed a chapel, decorated with exquisite simplicity, and so small that the altar step was only a few yards away from where I knelt in the other room. Then Leo XIII. entered from an inner one, and, kneeling down, made his preparatory prayer. He had changed in the few years since I saw him first, and had taken on an aspect so ethereal and sublime that one seemed to be contemplating a spirit and not a man. The pallor of his countenance was the pallor which deathless light imparts to some snowy, translucent veil through which it shines. His eyes were lamps of the soul burning with the holy brightness of celestial fires. His hands, the anointed hands set apart for the service of God, were white as driven snow—each movement of theirs was a prayer. The exceeding frailty of the white-robed figure gave no impression of age or weakness. Rather it seemed ready to rise and leave the things of earth behind. I once beheld a holy priest of the Brompton Oratory raised from the ground during Mass, despite his humble efforts to cling to the altar's edge and hide God's favours from man's eyes. It would not have surprised me to see the Holy Father carried away from us altogether in like manner. He seemed to have no part in material things at all.

His voice was resonant, young, and sweet. Never have I listened to anything more inspiring than his rendering of the sacred words. Each was clear and

distinct, and his slow delivery brought every one of them home to the heart. The "Gloria in Excelsis, Deo!" rang out like an angel's chant, and in the Nicene Creed it was as if the voice of the Church through all the ages spoke in the supreme act of faith pronounced by Christ's Vice-Regent on earth.

After Mass, when he had finished his own thanksgiving, he retired into a room behind the chapel, and we were taken in to him one by one. Kneeling close as a little child kneels beside its father, his eyes looking into mine, his blessed hand on my head, he let me tell him of a bitter trouble of heart for which there seemed no cure. He listened so patiently, so kindly, took it all as if mine were the only soul under his care. Then he advised, encouraged, promised to pray for me, and ended by saying, "Priez, priez, ma fille! La prière peut tout!"

When he had blessed me and I rose to go, the worst of my burden was left at his feet. And what he had foretold came to pass, the apparently impossible was granted and all was made right.

Once more I had the happiness of attending his private Mass, and after that I never saw him again. I was in Rome in the Jubilee year, 1900, but, thinking to stay some time, I waited to apply for an audience till the enormous stream of pilgrims should have somewhat diminished, and then I was suddenly called away and did not return before his death. That year told upon him greatly, but brought overwhelming joy to his heart. Never in all history had such throngs of believers come to pray at the Tomb of the Apostles and ask the blessing of their successor. The modern facilities of travel brought together representative Christians from every quarter of the globe, the rich thankful to find places on steamers

and railways with delegations of villagers and labourers travelling under the guidance of their own parish priests. Italy became the rendez-vous of Christendom. It was all the authorities could do to prevent the communications from being choked by the hundreds of extra trains which it was necessary to run, but the arrangements made by the Holy Father's receiving committee were so perfect that only solitary travellers had to ask for lodgings or conveyances. The organized pilgrimages were scheduled to follow each other in manageable succession, accommodation was provided for all their numbers, and excursions to places of interest laid out under competent leadership, so that every moment was profitably filled and no discomfort or disorder could ensue. How thankfully the Italian Government pocketed the vast sums thus brought into the country, it is needless to say. The Holy Father was quite a popular person as long as the influx lasted.

To an observer of human nature the sight of all this material for the Kingdom of Heaven was interesting in the extreme and presented pictures never to be forgotten. One morning in the height of the summer I was wandering about in the cool, silent spaces of St. Peter's when a group of Albanian women came down the great nave towards me from the High Altar. There were quite a number of them, holding each other's hands like children at play, and the joy in their hearts was expressed by a soft swaying movement that would break into a dance the moment they passed out of the sacred building. They were all young and marvellously good-looking, with fine features, raven-black hair, and white skins, and the midday sun was pouring down through the topaz-coloured windows of the dome and lighting up their dark eyes and smiling lips. Their costume was

magnificent. Full "sunray" skirts and sleeves of linen finer and whiter than I had ever seen, embroidered all over in heavy, bossy gold, both the white and the gold touched to ethereal splendour in the soft noonday radiance. A short jacket with open, falling sleeves was of crimson velvet, the very tint of a June rose, all covered with gold embroidery, and the shoes that peeped out from the snowy skirt repeated the crimson and gold. Had Fra Beato seen that beautiful band some of the angels in his "Paradiso" would have had darker hair and different costumes!

To return to the date with which I began this chapter—1878—my people were drawn to Tuscany when the summer came on, and took a villa near Siena. Our former habitation, the Poggiarello Bargagli, was already taken by the Helbigs, the Ouroussows were at Villa Gori, and we went still farther out to the Villa Spannocchi, not a show place like the others, but very large and surrounded by spacious gardens and vineyards. We were a big party, and the great rambling house suited us very well. My mother and stepfather, dear Marion, my little sister Daisy (now a tall girl of sixteen), her friend Valeria Valeri, her German governess Miss Hoepfner, I and my two children and their Chinese nurse, constituted a mixture of elements where comfort could only be ensured by space. We shook down on different floors and courtyards, I settling myself in an almost independent suite of rooms that ran out on one of the wings. They were everything that was pleasant, except for the fact that the ground floor below was apparently used as a stable for the great white oxen that dragged the carts about in the "podere." They were picturesque objects by day, but my slumbers were sadly disturbed by their stamping and snorting at

night. At last I sought out the "Fattore" or bailiff, and explained my case, asking him to find another shelter for his cattle. The good man stared at me, grew pale, cast a glance over his shoulder, and whispered: "Signorina mia, no animal has been stabled in that place for many years. I do not know what it is that you hear; but come, I will show you—the door is always locked and I have the key."

When he threw the great door open I saw dark vaults, with no traces of the use to which I had supposed they were dedicated; and when, that night, the sounds penetrated to my room, I rather regretted having established myself there alone. The nurseries were on the floor above, mercifully a little removed from the general family quarters, for my babies were badly spoilt, as all Eastern children are by native attendants, and made a terrible disturbance if their imperious little demands were not attended to at once. "Nei-Ma" was their abject slave—any commands of the "hsiao Ta-Jens" (the small great men) were sacred to her. One night, towards two o'clock in the morning, I heard footsteps on the stairs and hurried out, fearing that something was wrong. I met Nei-Ma, a candle in her hand, hastening down. "What is the matter?" I cried. "Oh, Tai-Tai, do not stop me, I must get down to the kitchen! Baby Ta-Jen has just waked up and is hungry; he told me to cook him five eggs, three poached and two boiled—he must not be kept waiting!" And she disappeared into the darkness below. I did not attempt to interfere with her, for under her funny indulgent care "Baby Ta-Jen" had never had a day's illness in his life, and was a splendid specimen of a two-year-old boy. He retained his fine appetite till he was five or six years old. Then I found him one night slipping "Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book"

under his pillow. On my asking the motive of his selection, he replied : " It is nice to read about the plum-puddings, even if you can't always get them."

Villa Spannocchi, like all Italian country houses, had a peculiar atmosphere about it—not altogether unpleasant, but quite distinctive : a combination of the cold smell of marble floors and old gilding in rooms kept closed for the greater part of the year, with the warm scents of things outside, ripening vineyards, carnations and oleanders, and the piles of fresh fruit always heaped on trays in the dining-room and hall. But as the summer advanced and the heat increased something subtle and deadly seemed to be let loose, and to creep up the stairs and invade the rooms near them. Daisy and I made raids of investigation, but could neither name nor locate the trouble. Our Italian servants pretended not to understand what we were fussing over ; but we noticed that none of the women except Nei-Ma could be induced to go about the house alone after dark. At the end of the summer, on the morning of our departure, the mystery was explained. " We thought it better not to tell the ladies before, but there are *thirteen Spannocchis* buried in the chapel under the front stairs ! '

CHAPTER XXX

A SIENESE SPECTACLE

The Chigis in Siena—The "Palio," a beautiful and unique spectacle—Acrobatic standard-bearers—The "Carroccio"—Villa Gori and Princess Ouroussow—"Mind drill"—Good advice—I am wanted as a chaperon—The first chapter of a queer story—Venus on probation—Misfortunes follow in her train—She is banished and buried—Second chapter of her adventures—She turns up in New York—Cannot give an account of herself—Is banished and buried again—Princess Ouroussow has a "crise de nerfs"—Her son in the Russo-Japanese war—Tommaso Salvini, my brother's friend—Return of my husband from China and subsequent appointment to Vienna.

THE Spannocchis had been great people in their day—the middle of the fifteenth century—but had long been overshadowed by the grandeur of the Chigis, who came into prominence some two hundred years later, when Cardinal Chigi became Pope as Alexander VII. The Spannocchi property had shrunk to the villa we inhabited, the beautiful palace in the town having been acquired by the Government for public offices; but the Chigis were and are everywhere in Siena, and very delightful friends and hosts they were. The Marchese married an English girl, a daughter of Mrs. Minto Elliott, the "Idle Woman in Italy," whom everybody knew and loved in print and out of it. We had known them almost all our lives; and when I was very young the Marchesa's costumes, always a little in advance

of the very latest fashion, had filled me with awe and admiration. I remember a vision of her that broke upon us when we were spending the summer years before at the Poggiarello Bargagli. A terrible colour called Metternich green had just been invented, and eighteenth-century "paniers" were the fashion. We—Marion, Lily Conrad, and I—were on the lawn, amusing ourselves with an enormous swing, which, pushed by his strong arms, carried us girls to dizzy heights, when there stepped towards us over the turf, as our first revelation of the newest "hurlement du chic," what looked like a full-plumed parokeet seen through a magnifying glass, the Marchesa Chigi, all a ruffle of vivid, arsenic-green silk, "paniers" like wings spreading far out on either side, heels so high that only the point of the toe touched the ground, a toque of green feathers on her head, and, to carry out the illusion, a white-enamelled cane nearly as tall as herself, surrounded by green bows, for a portable perch in her hand. We girls nearly fell out of the swing at the sight; it was a picture to remember.

In 1878 the æsthetic wave had broken over Europe, and when our pretty friend received us in her grey old palace opposite the Palazzo Pubblico she was wearing a clinging white silk gown with emerald buttons, which might have been copied from one of the early Vandyke portraits. She had asked us to come and see the "Palio" from her windows, and I went gladly, thankful to behold that unique pageant again. The guide-books nowadays describe it merely as a "horse-race with ancient costumes." If it has retained anything of its former splendour—and Siena is one of the most conservative little cities in the world—it is something which the lovers

of art and history might travel across the world to see. Siena was always rich in Guilds, and is still proud of having vanquished the Pisans in the days of the Condottieri, and robbed them of the famous sacred war-car, which accompanied them in all their campaigns and was the visible emblem of their power. The parading of the "Carroccio" is—or was when I was last in Siena—the central feature of the procession, the Guilds preceding it in triumph, as they doubtless did when it was first dragged into the city, and wearing the costumes of that day. There are twenty or more of the Guilds, representing all the arts and trades for which Siena used to be famous, and each has its banner, a standard of which the pole when carried past reaches from the pavement of the Piazza to the first-storey windows of the great houses. But the standard-bearer, followed at a respectful distance by the rest of the Guild, not only carries this towering sail of velvet and cloth of gold, but performs the most wonderful evolutions with it as he walks.

The Piazza is shaped like a lovely shell, sinking gently from three sides to the "Fonte Gaia," and the Palazzo Pubblico, which stands across the lower edge as the bar of the valve gathers in the converging lines of the scallop-shell. The procession defiles into it from one of the upper streets, a slow ripple of colour and movement growing fuller every moment, and stretching down the slope like a torrent of gems. In the first distance, across the soft grey space, it seems to be travelling under a canopy of ever-moving wings; but as it approaches the wings become banners forty feet long, pointed like a pennon, and waving through the air in great arcs of motion, now rising at full length from

the pole's tip, now whirling round it, now sinking forward at full length before it, while the bearer leaps over the pole, changes it with lightning speed from one hand to the other, and has it flying wide against the sky before a single fold has had time to touch the ground. He and his companions look as if they had just stepped down from Sodoma's frescoes. When the last Guild has debouched into the Piazza, the space is circled from base to apex with the moving tide of gorgeous colour, and canopied by the ceaseless sweeping of those sumptuous sun-touched wings. The fifteenth century lives again for that one day in Siena; and even its superstitions are not forgotten. When at last, dragged by eight splendidly caparisoned horses, the Carroccio, that dark, decrepit, blood-stained old chariot, comes tottering along on its clumsy wheels, the modern mind can scarcely believe that it was regarded as the sacred standard of a proud and wealthy people, and that those wheels ran with gore before it was wrenched away from them.

The Chigis had let the famous Villa Gori to Prince Ouroussow, of the Russian Embassy. He was absent a good deal of the time at his post in Rome, less because there was much to do there than because he was sadly bored in the country. A rather melancholy man, as so many nice Russians are, he had a delicate caustic wit and was a charming companion. He paid me the compliment of considering me a good friend for his wife, and we three had many pleasant hours together that summer and the next winter when we all met in Rome. Pauline was quite a different kind of person. An only child and an heiress (*née* Abaza), very pretty, very gay, indulged by her father, her only surviving parent, till she had developed a power of self-will that every one near her

had to count with and generally yield to, she had such appealing ways and so much warmth of heart that it was impossible not to love her. With all that went something less frequently met with in Russian girls, fair brains and a great desire to improve her mind. I had realized the defects of my education before leaving China, or rather had been made to realize them by the stern lectures of a friend, a man of very high intelligence, who prophesied hard things to me unless I hastened to mend my ways. "All you have now will drop away from you," he said. "It is nothing but pleasure that you seek in your reading and studying. Every mind needs training, real drill, and women hardly ever get it because there are only three studies that supply it and they are left out of most girls' educations—Mathematics, Greek, and Logic. You shy at the first two? Then take up logic and learn how to think." He put me through a little course of this study, and laid out reading enough to fill some years, but I lost his friendly guidance when I left China and dragged my intellectual anchors a little. I became fascinated with that pompous and jejeune philosopher, now relegated to fitting obscurity, Herbert Spencer, and Pauline and I gave ourselves many a headache over his pages during warm mornings at the Villa Gori. But we were young, life smiled on us, and the outside world beckoned alluringly, so at last we put "mind drill" aside as something to fall back upon in the duller days. Not in dull days—for I never have any—but in sad ones it has proved a bracing exercise for its own sake, quite apart from its too trifling results in other directions. My mother often said that people who could use their brains need never break their hearts. We had known and revered a man who used to preach this doctrine, Mr. Sotheby, the book-lover, who

was, I believe, a member of the great firm whose rooms have been for so long one of the book marts of the world. He had married a woman much younger than himself, a woman whose every impulse of mind was as gracious as all her acts and movements were sweet and graceful. She adored her elderly husband so wholeheartedly that when he was dying he said to her: "My dear, I want you to make me a solemn promise that, as soon as I am dead, you will begin to learn Greek. Nothing else will save your reason and console you for my loss."

Princess Ouroussow rushed over to the villa one afternoon, and said that I must come to her at once to stay, because her husband had been called away to Rome, and one of his bachelor friends was to arrive that evening for a week's visit—she was in a terrible dilemma! My mother said that she would watch over the children, and I drove back to the Gori with Pauline, who, whatever her little caprices in other directions, never trifled with the proprieties. Her guest, the Marchese G——, turned out to be very good company, and, as we sat on the terrace after dinner, told us many interesting stories, to one of which circumstances supplied a curious second chapter more than twenty-five years afterwards.

His father died when he was quite young, and his mother chose as a residence a remote property far down on the South Italian coast, a castle built on a rocky cliff close to the sea, a wild lonely spot which had once served for the settlement of a Greek colony, but now was only marked by the castle and a hamlet in the rift below, where a little bay gave shelter for the fishing boats by which the scant population earned its livelihood. The parish church was, as usual in the feudal strongholds, within the

From a photograph by Messrs. Thomson, New Bond Street, London

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precincts of the castle above. The parish priest and the boys' tutor were the only educated men in the place. When G—— was about fifteen it was found necessary to open up a channel or drain through one of the ravines that ran back through the little bay and had in the course of centuries gathered a few feet of soil in its bottom. The diggers there turned up something which surprised and frightened them, a large statue of a nude woman, evidently buried with the greatest care, for, beyond a coating of dirt and a slight pitting of the marble, it had suffered nothing from its long imprisonment. The traditions of paganism are so vivid still in South Italy that the lower classes literally shrink from touching anything that can have served as an image of one of the false gods. In their eyes all such are the work of the devil, and should be destroyed as quickly as possible. But such was not the sentiment of their masters in this case. G——'s tutor and the priest, both cultivated men and fairly learned on the subject of antiques, examined the find and went into raptures over its beauty, declared it a Venus of true Greek origin, and had it brought up to the castle with the greatest care in spite of the mutterings and headshakes of the men who had to carry it and the outspoken protests of all the rest.

The Marchesa was inclined to agree with her people. She was a very pious woman and exceedingly strict in her ideas; she realized the value and beauty of the statue, but could not reconcile herself to the enormity of keeping the unclothed figure of a pagan goddess in her well-regulated house. There was argument and discord for a day or two, the young lord ranging himself against his mother with Venus's supporters. Then a happy compromise was hit upon. The Marchesa said

Venus might stay if she would have her face washed and wear decent clothes. Nobody could object to this, and the shameless lady was vigorously scrubbed, purified with many ablutions, and prayers, too, I imagine, draped in rich decorous garments like the figure of a saint, and set up on a pedestal in one of the apartments—on trial for her good behaviour.

But she must have resented her enforced conversion, for from that moment everything went wrong. Boats were swamped at sea, fish would not come to the nets, storms destroyed the tiny crops between the rocks. At last the people could stand it no longer. They felt that the wrath of Heaven was descending upon them in consequence of the impiety committed, and a deputation waited on the Marchesa to inform her of the facts and to implore—if necessary, to insist on—the removal of the cause of them. She quite sympathized with her people's feelings on the subject, so Venus was condemned and banished. Stripped of her beautiful robes, she was ignominiously hauled down the incline, tumbled into her old grave, and the earth was vigorously stamped down on top of her. Thus endeth Chapter One. G—— told us that when he came of age he would have wished to rescue the beautiful thing, but the feeling about it ran so high among the people that he had deemed it more prudent to abstain.

What I cannot help considering Chapter Two opened in New York, more than a quarter of a century later. A patriotic citizen, a man of much culture, brought from abroad a statue of Venus, very beautiful, very Greek, which he generously proposed to present to the Public Gallery. Crowds flocked to see it when it was put on exhibition, and the admiration it excited was only slightly allayed

by the pinkish brown tint of the marble which earned for it the name of "The chocolate Venus." But the New York art-critics, who had had such admirable opportunities of studying true antiques from a few casts (most of which I remember my stepfather procured for them in Rome when I was a little girl), denounced the statue as a fraud, a modern imitation, and were upheld in their judgment, if I remember rightly, by the distinguished Englishman who had just come over from the Olympus of West Kensington to direct the artistic aspirations of the New Yorkers. What confirmed them in their conviction were the dark suspicions aroused by the owner's refusal to give any account of how the statue came into his possession. All he would say was that he "had bought it at sea." Was it likely, the infallibles scornfully asked, that a wandering yachtsman should pick up a thing like that in mid-ocean? The public began to laugh, the judges refused to place such a patent fraud among the art treasures of the United States, and the owner, bitterly incensed, boxed up the poor Venus—unsuccessful in this as in her other effort to see the light—and bundled her back to the Customs House, where she still was when I last heard of her. If my surmise about her origin is the true one, the missing links in the story are easily supplied. The stringent law forbidding the exportation of ancient works of art from Italy would necessitate an exciting episode of smuggling. The American purchaser had, of course, seen and examined the statue on land, either the proprietor or a generation of peasants less superstitious than the last having decided to turn an honest penny by its sale, and the only way to do so was to cheat the shore police by getting it on board a felucca at dead of night and rowing

out to the yacht hovering in the offing, the new owner probably having to give his oath never to betray the transaction.

I had quite forgotten G——'s Venus when the incident in New York recalled the story to my mind, and with it the pleasant days of that summer in Siena, when we roamed all over the country by day, and sat on the terrace or went over to the Poggiarello to get Madame Helbig to play for us in the evenings. Princess Ouroussow was a music worshipper of the then fashionable kind, a rabid "Wagnerienne," so indoctrinated with the principles of that school that it gave her a "crise de nerfs" to hear any other. Some travelling opera company came to Siena, and gave one of Donizetti's old productions rather nicely. It is not particularly interesting music, but it was sweet and gay; and the rest of us, Ouroussow, G——, and I, were quite enjoying ourselves, when, to our dismay, Pauline burst into floods of tears, and requested to be taken home—she knew she would be ill if she had to listen to that rubbish any longer! She outgrew these little affectations in time, and the world has had cause lately to be grateful for her real love of music, since it was she who discovered the gifts and provided the training for one of the most prominent violinists who is delighting it to-day. That she very nearly caused a rupture of relations between her own country and France when Prince Ouroussow was Russian Ambassador in Paris, by her impolitic treatment of certain officials, may be forgiven her. I am sure it is a little hard to take the modern French official seriously. My friend's son, a little red-haired baby when I last saw him, took part in the Russo-Japanese war, but escaped the funny experience

which so many officers had, that of being confined as prisoners, though with many honours and every luxury, in the country which had been the acknowledged picnicking ground for the garrison of Vladivostock. A certain island off Nagasaki was devoted to hotels and tea-houses for these free-handed Muscovites; and bitter was the wailing there when the war broke out, and the roubles ceased to flow into the Japanese publicans' hands.

My husband was detained in Peking till the spring of 1879, and I passed the winter very pleasantly with my people in Rome, renewing old acquaintances and making new ones—among the latter that of Salvini, who was a great friend of Marion's. He was a most genial companion, very striking in appearance, a real South Italian, with big marked features and aggressively observant dark eyes. We had some interesting talks about things in general, and plays in particular; but he did not take nearly so much notice of me as I would have wished! When he was with us he was much wrapped up in Marion, and the rest of his attention was fervently centred on a charming American girl, a connection of ours, who was turning all the men's heads that year, and who, serenely unconscious of the great actor's devotion, could never manage to remember his name.

In May Hugh was released from his burdensome exile, and rejoined me in Rome. We travelled up to England, took a long holiday, and, early in 1880, went to Vienna, of which post he had just been appointed Secretary of Embassy.

CHAPTER XXXI

VIENNA, FROM 1880 TO 1882

Why we were sent to Vienna—Viennese dislike of foreigners—"The Gott-sei-danks"—Kind Princess Reuss—Our noisy children and an alarming old lady—My work is sketched out for me—Strained relations with Turkey—Story of a stolen cipher—The quarrel between Turkey and Greece—Mr. Gladstone's influence—British Diplomatists under Conservative or Liberal Ministry—The Berlin Conference—The two worst massacres of modern times—Count Ignatieff, the "Father of Lies"—Russians in Vienna—Prince Cantacuzène—Marked respect and fear of Russia always evident on the Continent—Change of British views since the death of Lord Beaconsfield—Bishop Strossmayer—His great work in Croatia—His dream of Pan-Slavism—His detractors and calumniators—The forged pamphlet—Its author repents and obtains the Bishop's forgiveness—His death at the age of ninety.

MY husband's appointment to Vienna was made by way of apology to our Ambassador and society there for certain untoward events in the career of the gentleman who had preceded him as Secretary of Embassy. Shortly after his return from China, Hugh had been offered the post of Minister Resident in Bogotá (Colombia), but with the considerate rider that it would not be remembered against him if he refused to accept it. He had spent some years in Central America quite in the beginning of his career—years which he looked upon as absolutely wasted (although they had provided him with a fund of queer experiences which were a great

amusement to me when I could get him to "reminisce" about them), and he had firmly made up his mind to avoid that zone altogether in future. Colombia lay too near it to be possible; we wanted a few years of Europe too, so he resisted the temptation of becoming his own "boss" at once, and went very gladly to serve a second time under Sir Henry Elliot, the latter having been his Chief once before, almost immediately after he went into Diplomacy.

The British Foreign Office, usually so reasonable, methodical, and considerate in its ways, occasionally publishes for the benefit of its servants manifestoes, some needed and some not, which in either case give the members of the Service what the maids call "a turn." Now it is an exhortation to copy despatches in a decent hand, because the men who have to read them are elderly and tired and very busy; now it is a reminder that Chancery work is not the only object with which Englishmen are sent abroad—they are to take their proper part in social doings, and consider it one of their duties to make themselves agreeable. In 1878 or thereabouts, under a Liberal Ministry of course, came a circular which roused a storm of indignation all through the Diplomatic family, the curt announcement that promotion in future would not depend on length of service or merit of record, but that the authorities would select whomsoever they considered the right person for any particular post.

Pursuing this novel course, their psychological intuition led them to bestow the coveted appointment of Secretary of Embassy in Vienna on a certain gallant officer who had occupied an important position for a time in another capital, and had married the daughter of

a more highly placed official. Soon after making his appearance in Vienna he fell a victim to the charms of a lady better known for beauty than virtue. With a cynicism very unusual in a man of his class he was seen with her everywhere, crowning his achievement one evening in the Volks Garten (where all Viennese society meets in summer to chatter and listen to the band), by sitting down with her at a table close to the one where sat his wife with Sir Henry and Lady Elliot. The scandal was complete. Of course he had to leave, I am sorry to say to the triumphant joy of the Service in general. But the lurid memories he had left behind led to a rather embarrassing complication sometime later when Hugh was holding the same appointment of Secretary. A man of his name, a distant connection, I believe, had been one of our greatest friends in China, where he was serving under Sir Robert Hart. One day, to my great joy, he turned up in Vienna, and came to see me. It was in the morning, and my husband was over at the Chancery, so I told my visitor that he must come and dine with us as soon as possible, but that I must consult Hugh about the day, as he might have made some engagement of which I was ignorant. Z—— smiled, promised to accept, and departed, having paid a very long visit, in the course of which he had given me an apparently full account of his doings since our last meeting.

As soon as Hugh returned a note was despatched to the hotel anent the dinner engagement, and our English butler took it himself so as to get an immediate verbal answer. To our surprise he brought no answer ; my impatient queries were met in shocked silence, and then the good man, looking up at me with an expression of

profound regret and apology, whispered: "If you please, ma'am—I don't really like to tell you—but Mr. Z—— isn't alone at the hotel. I am sorry to say he has got a young lady, a very pretty young lady, with him! I'm afraid it runs in the blood!" Then he fled from the room.

Hugh and I looked at each other in dismay; then he seized his hat and without a moment's pause drove to the hotel, to find out whether Wicks had been telling the truth, and if so to inflict condign punishment upon young Z—— for daring to call upon me under such circumstances. He was ushered into a room where a charming English girl came forward to greet him, while her blushing bridegroom stammered, "Let me introduce you to Mrs. Z——. We were married last week."

I always regretted not having witnessed that scene. Hugh's relief and surprise, Z——'s dumb glances imploring him not to give him away, the bride's gradual laying aside of her resentment at not having been included in the invitation to dinner, must all have been very funny. It came out in later confidences that our friend had been much too shy to tell me of his marriage himself, and trusted that I should find out about it somehow in time.

I am afraid his visit to Vienna was a little spoilt by the unlucky synonym. Hotel lists are published in the papers, and a day or two later Lady Elliot sternly asked me if it were true that Mr. Z—— was in town and had dined with us? The Viennese all believed that the new arrival was the hero of the former scandal, and said unpleasant things about British manners and morals. Altogether, in spite of the great pleasure we had in seeing our friend again, and in making the acquaintance of his

bright, pretty bride, it was rather a relief when they moved on.

I had been rather bored in England, and was thankful to be in a more familiar atmosphere, in spite of my husband's warnings that in China I had only played in the background of Diplomatic life, and was now, as he expressed it, to be "put through the mill." It had been a joy even to get to Paris, though I had a strenuous time there in one way. We had accumulated by this time a vast quantity of possessions of one kind and another, and were taking them all with us, for I never trusted anything to the slow mercies of the "petite vitesse." When we reached the Gare du Nord half a platform was covered with cases marked "Fraser," and the baggage master looked doubtful when I explained that they were all to be transported to the Gare de Lyon at once. His head man came and contemplated them, and we counted them together—there were just ninety packages. "Pristi! M'en va vous donner un camion!" he exclaimed, and a monster van was brought out and loaded to crawl across the miles of rough, ill-paved streets which separate the stations. I found all my boxes on the through express for Vienna the next morning when I piloted Hugh and the children and the maids on to the train, for from the moment he returned to Europe my husband relinquished all such arrangements to me, declaring that I was a born courier and it would be a pity to deprive me of what evidently gave me so much pleasure.

We were met and looked after in Vienna by an old friend of mine, Mr. Casson, who was then the American Minister there, and who had engaged rooms for us at the Erz Herzog Karl Hotel, near his own house. He at once undertook to help us find an apartment, no very

easy matter in the height of the season, and one to which I could not devote much time, for we were instantly caught off our feet in the social whirl. I was very fortunate in having the dearest and kindest of Chiefesses to guide me through the labyrinth of Austrian society, a thing which, for minute etiquette and delicate gradations, cannot be matched in the world. Lady Elliot had it all at her fingers' ends, of course, and was so generally beloved that people were very good to me for her sake. As a rule foreigners are scarcely more popular in Vienna than in Peking. "Society," with a big S, consisted of some four hundred families who were reckoned "Hoffähig" (fit to come to Court) because they could show the requisite sixteen quarterings. Anything less did not exist for them, and during the whole time I was there I never came within speaking distance of a member of the "Haute Finance" or the Professorial circles. If the head of one of these families was led into a union with a lady of another class, his descendants were debarred for three generations from paying their respects to the Sovereigns, and the taint was so dreaded that he could not find Austrian husbands for his girls. Count Kinsky committed this crime, and his brilliant and pretty daughters had to marry foreigners. The eldest scored, however, for she became the wife of a French Secretary of Embassy, and sailed proudly in with the Corps Diplomatique at the Hofburg, where her sisters could not be admitted. This ridiculous narrowness of view bred in the Viennese aristocrats an arrogance that I have never seen equalled. There was no room in their minds for appreciation of anything beyond their own little world; foreigners in general were looked upon as barbarians, and their presence resented as a check on the

flow of family and Court gossip, carried on preferably in broad patois and too illuminating to be shared by outsiders. In describing some party to one of our Attachés, Lily Kinsky, forgetting his nationality, remarked, "It was perfectly delightful, for, Gott sei dank, there was not a single foreigner there!" an indiscretion which went through the Diplomatic Corps before night and earned for our exclusive friends the nickname of the "Gott-sei-danks."

One exception was made—for the Elliots. No one could help loving them both, and fearing them a little too. A man and a woman of the best English class, morally, intellectually, socially; cheerful, tolerant, every angle polished off by a lifelong intercourse with the Great World, and every respectable prejudice strengthened to steely hardness by the contemplation of its follies, they were such types of the British character as it is good for foreigners to see. One wished there were more like them! Their only daughter, Gertrude, was equally charming, inheriting her father's fine sense of humour and her mother's gracious, kindly ways. No wonder that to be taken into their friendship ensured a welcome seldom accorded to strangers, and invitations to houses where many of our colleagues tried for admission in vain.

A day or two after our arrival Lady Elliot took me to pay a round of visits, beginning at the German Embassy, which was close to our own. The Ambassador at that time was Prince Reuss, Henry VII. of that ilk, who had married in 1876 Princess Marie of Saxe-Weimar, who had a strong Russian strain in her, her two grandmothers having both been daughters of the unfortunate Emperor Paul of Russia. But the strain had been modified in transmission through Holland and Saxe-

Weimar, and Princess Marie Reuss was more German than anything else, one of those genial, healthy, intelligent, sweet-tempered women whom it is good to know and whose friendship one feels to be an honour. The Viennese said she gave herself airs, and in the confidence of intimacy she allowed herself to make merciless fun of their haughty pretensions and narrow-mindedness, amusing herself by the harmless revenge she enjoyed when her mother, a full-blown Royalty, came to stay with her, and all the unapproachable dowagers in the town had to come and pay their respects to the alarming old lady.

From the very first Princess Reuss, who was very fond of the Elliots, took trouble to make things pleasant for me, and as time went on she became a firm friend to whom I could talk as I could to very few others in what is necessarily the guarded atmosphere of the Diplomatic Corps. She was only a year or two older than I, had two little boys about my children's age, and lived so near that we could reach each other's dwellings on foot and the children could play together every day in her garden, her English nurse hailing mine as a compatriot. I had not met any of the Reuss tribe before I went to Vienna, and it was funny to find the Prince written down as Henry VII., son of Henry LXIII.; and *his* boys, as Henry XXXII. and Henry XXXIII.! As has been explained in a former chapter, Henry is the only Christian name ever given in the family, which is many-branched and prolific, and the numeration begins with the first boy born in a century and ends with the last. Nicknames have to be invented for the children; those in Vienna were known as Heini and Henni, and very jolly, high-spirited little fellows they were, only

awed into quietness during Grandmamma's visits, which they looked upon as dire afflictions. The Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar was very stout and solemn, and evidently considered that children required repressing. When the little quartet got too noisy in their games and races about the house, she would come and stand still and look at them in severe silence more awful than words. It reduced them to submission at once, but they learnt to dodge her in time. One would give warning, and then all would disperse, hiding under sofas and behind screens, so that when she swept in "in a yellow satin gown and very frightening," as my eldest described her, the place was empty, and she would go off to seek for the sinners elsewhere.

The first function I attended in Vienna was a dance at the German Embassy, which Princess Reuss gave about a week after our arrival. She got it up on the spur of the moment, only gave verbal invitations and called it a "Sauterie," but the whole world was there; and Lady Elliot said it was extremely fortunate, since now she could not only make me acquainted with all our colleagues, but present me to the Viennese whom it was my business to know. This seemed very kind of her, but I was looking longingly at the splendid floor and listening more attentively to the strains of the band than to anything else. "It has *got* to be done, my dear!" My beautiful grey-haired Chiefess laid her hand firmly on my arm and sailed away with me, through room after room, each fuller than the last, as it looked to me, of gorgeously bedecked dowagers, with historical names, who gazed at me sadly over breastplates of diamonds, murmured a few polite words as I made my curtsey, and then faded out of my consciousness as I

was hurried off to the next group. When it was over—it took almost all the evening—my monitress gave a big sigh of relief, as well she might, and informed me that I must leave cards on every one of those women within twenty-four hours, and be sure to remember their names and faces when I met them again. That was my first experience of the "mill." By the time I had carried out my instructions I had to pull the first grey hairs out of my fringe. The exercise was unexpectedly strenuous!

At that time the Embassy at Vienna was the channel through which all communications between the Foreign Office and the Ambassador in Constantinople had to pass and be read before being forwarded to their destination; and during the early summer of 1880 the Turkish complications caused the Vienna Chancery to be so deluged with telegrams and despatches that it was all the Staff could do to cope with them at all. One of the Attachés, Francis Stronge, had rooms at the Embassy, so as to be on hand day and night; and I remember a certain Sunday morning when the poor boy had had nineteen telegrams, one of them ten sheets long, to decipher before noon. He became such an expert at the task that he carried most of the cipher in his head, and could give the meaning of the cryptic numerals without glancing at the key. Just as he had reached this happy stage something happened somewhere, as it periodically does, to necessitate the substitution of a fresh cipher, and loud and long were his laments over the misfortune. Not so, I fancy, those of the official in London who receives five hundred pounds for the construction of a fresh dictionary every time some accident betrays to outsiders the secrets of the current

one, kept with such jealous care that the key of its hiding-place never leaves the watch-chain of the man authorized to use it; and even the cover is carefully destroyed when a cipher becomes obsolete. Unfortunately, it has to be confided sometimes, in distant countries, to unpaid vice-Consuls, who do not treat it with the same awe and veneration, and accidents occur. On the West Coast of South America there is a little town in charge of one of these officials, who, finding it convenient to go away, requested the French Consul to attend to his business for him, and, with beautiful simplicity, entrusted him with the care of the precious cipher. No sooner had he left the place than the obliging Frenchman called in a photographer, had every page reproduced, and triumphantly sent off the bundle to Paris.

But such a betrayal very soon leaks out; some item caught from the flash of the wires is printed in the papers, and our Argus-eyed English officials remedy the trouble in an amazingly short time. To do the latter justice, I must say that, in all the twenty years of my connection with our own Chanceries, when I have often acted as my husband's private secretary, I never came upon the slightest trace of an attempt on their part to thus violate the private correspondence of other nations. Hugh would have left the Service rather than undertake such dirty work.

The quarrel between Turkey and Greece over the frontier question very nearly plunged Europe into war in 1880. Turkey refusing to recognize the delimitations settled at the Berlin Conference two years earlier, Greece crying out for her promised territory and preparing to take it by force, the Representatives of the Great Powers

administering anodynes to Greece and fiery stimulants to Turkey—all this pounced upon and flaunted by the entire European Press, constituted the elements of a first-class quarrel, which would not end with the two nations that began it, and the Powers were resolved to make them keep the peace.

Their intention was very nearly frustrated by a third party to the quarrel, a small but very resolute one. A large portion of Albanian territory had been adjudged to Montenegro by the arrangement at Berlin; and the Montenegrins, tired of waiting for their friends to help them, attempted to occupy it. The Albanians being their nearest neighbours, had of course been at feud with them since the beginning of time, and bitterly resented being handed over to them. The Albanian League was formed to prevent the cession of the territory, and took possession of Dulcigno, whence the Montenegrins endeavoured to evict them. The Sultan secretly endorsed the Albanian protest, and refused to interfere with the course of events till an imposing naval demonstration was made by all the Powers, at Ragusa, in September, under the command of Admiral Seymour, when he sulkily yielded, and sent troops into the disputed district to enforce the cession of it.

Austria was fully occupied meanwhile in persuading the Mohammedans of Bosnia to submit to her rule instead of to that of the Commander of the Faithful; and things did not quiet down there till the middle of the next year, when, on Mr. Gladstone's return to power, his silver oratory turned the tide of British sympathy away from Turkey to the support of Greece, and, incidentally, much interfered with the comfort of British Representatives abroad. We never needed telegrams

to inform us when the Conservatives went out and the Liberals came in : the attitude of the foreigners wherever we were changed within the hour, and told us all the story. The respectful deference with which we were treated when the Conservatives were on the Government benches turned into a scornful rudeness very galling to the victims of it. Hats off last night, something very near kicks this morning! England under Lord Beaconsfield and England under Mr. Gladstone—and their respective successors—stand one at the top and one at the bottom of the scale of value in every country where England has a word to say or a subject to protect. Were the members of the British Diplomatic Service allowed to register their sympathies at the polls, very few of them would vote for a Liberal candidate.

When we reached Vienna in the early days of 1880, England was still nervously anxious as to the workings of the Treaty of Berlin. Opinions were much divided, and had been for some years, upon the question of the Turkish possessions in Europe. Our Chief, Sir Henry Elliot, had been so conspicuously a partisan of the Osmanli administration of its own subjects that it had been thought wise to promote him to the Embassy at Vienna in February 1878, from that of which he had been formerly the head at Constantinople ; on the other hand, the "New Sultan," as they still called Abdul Hamid II., had few friends elsewhere. Even those, as were some about us, otherwise well disposed towards Turkey and inveterate foes to Russia, had to confess to the fact that their sympathies had been considerably alienated from Abdul Hamid on account of the shocking Bulgarian atrocities. These, despite Sir Henry Elliot's conviction that the reports of them had been "grossly

exaggerated," had been really too frightful to be overlooked; it is needless to say that Sir Henry spoke in the best of good faith, but had been grievously misled by the Turkish officials.

Another point against Abdul Hamid's popularity was the still unravelled mystery surrounding the death of the Sultan Abdul Aziz, on June 4th, 1876, and the "insanity" on account of which the young Sultan, Murad V., was removed from the Divan on August 31st of the same year. It is, to say the least of it, a remarkable coincidence that both the accession to the throne and the abdication from it of Abdul Hamid should have been marked by two of the worst massacres of modern times—that of 1876 in Bulgaria, and of 1909 at Adama in Armenia. I suppose it would be uncharitable to suggest that by such means he depended upon arousing the religious fanaticism of the Mohammedans in his favour—that, in fact, with him it was a case of "When in doubt, play trumps," and that the trump-card was a massacre.

Be that as it may, the frightful fact was that, during all his reign, massacre was the shrewdest and wisest of policies for Abdul Hamid. He knew perfectly well that by permitting it he was certain of one or both of two eminently desirable results for himself—the extinction of his internal enemies and the sowing of quarrels and dissensions among his foreign enemies; in the end it was always a foregone conclusion that if he irritated the Russians the English would support him in almost anything. Ever since 1878, when Lord Beaconsfield interfered to save Abdul Hamid from the Russian wrath, the Sublime Porte had no hesitation in ordering a massacre whenever it seemed advisable.

Sir Henry Elliot's foremost opponent in Constantinople had been the famous Count Ignatieff, the Russian Ambassador. I have always regretted that I never met Ignatieff in person, although I came to know him well enough from the talk of one official and another in Vienna. His nickname, "The Father of Lies," of which he was extremely proud, described him fairly accurately according to most of them—especially his political adversaries. But for me he will always be memorable in connection with one of the strangest true stories I have ever known, but which I will relate in another chapter.

The Russian Ambassador at that time in Vienna was d'Oubril, whom I had met before in Rome. But as the Head of a Mission he was less communicative than his subordinates, with one of whom, Cantacuzène, I struck up a great friendship from the very first. George Cantacuzène, who was then Secretary of Embassy, was rather a retiring person in comparison with the majority of Russian Diplomatists, a widower with one small daughter, around whom his existence centred ; he was more given to spending his spare time in the child's company or among his books than in the world of Viennese Society. Now and again, though, he would come over to our apartment in the Kärntner Ring for a cup of tea and an exchange of views in regard to books or politics—and, voiced by him, politics were quite as interesting as any books.

Himself a descendant of the house that furnished two rulers of the Eastern Empire, Cantacuzène had an unbounded faith in the future of Holy Russia ; it was from him more than from any one else that I received my first impression of the vast influence, moral and social as well as political, of Russia.

No one who has not spent some years among the people of North Central Europe can possibly appreciate the depth and the scope of the Russian element in the life of Court and Chancery. However much individuals here and there may protest their indifference, nay, even their detestation of Russia and all her works, you have only to scratch the surface a very little and, in nine cases out of every ten, you will see something of the acquired Muscovite beneath the overlaying of German or Austrian. The extraordinary vitality and youth of the greatest of the Slav nations are a never-ceasing source of grudging resentment to her less radiantly healthy and robust neighbours, to whom the young giant of the Morning Land, as the Germans call it, seems the embodiment of disquieting vigour! As has come to be generally acknowledged, it is due to the Asiatic in her constitution that Russia has hitherto been preserved from the worst pitfalls of Western Liberalism. One can hardly wonder that many, even outside Russia herself, have come—often perhaps unwillingly—to the belief that she is destined to be the saviour of Europe from the masonic and Semitic influences that are now doing their utmost to overthrow religion, law, and order, especially in France and Italy. And, speaking of France, there can be little doubt that the Franco-Russian Alliance has played latterly a not inconsiderable part in temporarily alienating the sympathies of many of the devout Russian people from their Sovereign's foreign policy; to them it has been a heavy sorrow to think that the beloved "Little Father" should be in any way associated with the atheistic rabble of the French Government.

It is curious, in looking back to those days of 1880, to see how time has changed the political outlook of

Europe; more particularly to note the then seemingly insignificant factors that have since brought about such unexpected results. We ourselves of the Embassy Staff were completely under the influence of the Beaconsfield traditions of protective tolerance of Turkey and official vigilant suspicion towards Russia. Our official feelings of sincerest esteem were for the new German Empire and its universally revered Head—the Emperor William, that is to say, and not Prince Bismarck, as some would since appear to have the world believe. For Austria herself, as our hostess, we felt, I think, genuine affection and sympathy in her courageous struggle to ensure her military and administrative efficiency in the face of recent terrible misfortunes. By the way, the simulated indignation of a section of the Press in several countries—including the United States—in reference to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has seemed very amusing to a good many people who remembered that, by the secret articles of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, it was expressly agreed that Austria should take over the provinces *absolutely* after occupying and administering them for the term of thirty years from that date—1878–1908.

France was then still on her best behaviour, and working hard to efface the scandal of the Commune from the recollection of her neighbours. Even the Republican Government thought it advisable to have itself represented abroad by men, for the most part, of some social standing, so that many of the old names yet lingered on in French Diplomacy until the banishment of the French Royalties from France in 1886, when the majority of "aristo" surnames disappeared from the list of her public servants.

One of the most bitterly discussed personalities of that epoch in Vienna was Joseph George Strossmayer, the Bishop of Djakoro in Croatia, and perhaps the strongest figure for good in all the Empire. His influence in Croatia itself was absolutely paramount; also he had a habit of plain speaking that made many enemies for him. But, in the end, he was always proved to have been in the right. Politically he stood for the emancipation of his country, Catholic Croatia, from the galling overlordship of Hungary, tainted with heresy and Semitism; and, in matters religious, his great aim was the reunion of the Roman and Greek Churches—indeed he might be called the apostle of pan-Slavism, that reunion and reconciliation of all the Slav nations, from Russia on through Poland and the Balkan States, to Slavonia and Croatia in the West. His work was, as may be imagined, viewed with anything but favour by the Austrians and the Magyars of Hungary, who moved heaven and earth to bring about his downfall, but in vain. At the time when the Russian (Greek) Church was celebrating the millennium of Russia's conversion to Christianity, it may be remembered that a great outcry was occasioned by Bishop Strossmayer's telegram of felicitation and sympathy to the Russian Metropolitan of Kieff. The good Bishop's enemies made all the capital they could out of this, declaring that Strossmayer was trying to play into the hands of Russia.

But Strossmayer never wavered from the enterprise he had set for himself. When, on meeting him in public, the Emperor remarked tentatively, "My dear Bishop, your telegram to Kieff has wounded many susceptibilities. Acknowledge that it was, to say the least

of it, ill advised," the Bishop simply replied that his conscience was quite at rest. And that was all he had to say on the subject. I myself was, I confess it, for a time prejudiced against Strossmayer by an infamous pamphlet that was spread broadcast throughout Europe; this pamphlet was a bitter attack upon the Catholic Church, and purported to be written and signed by Strossmayer. It was many years before the forger—a man who had fled to America—acknowledged himself publicly as the author, and caused a letter to be written to Bishop Strossmayer, begging for his forgiveness—which, it is needless to add, was freely given.

There were few of us at the time who saw the ultimate result of the Bishop's work. Of pan-Slavism we all knew; but the majority had a belief that it was destined to die out in the contest with pan-Germanism as exemplified by the "Drang nach Osten"—the "Pushing Eastward" policy of Austria herself in her new relation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, so we understood, were destined to become thoroughly Germanized, as a wedge between the Eastern and Southern Slavs. But it appears from the present (1910) outlook that we were wrong, and that the recent annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina can only result in drawing closer the ties between the scattered Slavic peoples that bound the Austrian Empire on the South and East. And so, in the end, Austria will have gained her object—that of solidifying herself—not as was expected, by the spread of Germanism, but through the closer knitting of her most loyal possessions, the Slavonic Provinces, into one harmonious whole in response to the disintegrating influence of the hated Hungarian, to purchase whose malignant partnership the Cabinet of Vienna handed over Bosnia in

1876 to the Magyars, whose first act was to close the Catholic Seminary founded by Strossmayer at Djakoro. He lived to a great age, dying at ninety a few years ago, after seeing his beloved Croatia in firm possession of at least a portion of her rights.

CHAPTER XXXII

COURT AND SOCIETY LIFE IN AUSTRIA

Receptions at the Hofburg—The mirror room and the memories of 1814—The Congress of Vienna and *The Interrupted Dance*—Order of procedure at Court—Impressions of the Empress—Her two stock questions—Her unfortunate indifference to public sentiment and her consequent unpopularity—Her proficiency in riding—Unhappy fate attaching to her whole family—Influence of young girls in Viennese society—Its regulations for them—"There comes a *mother*!"—A French Duchess's admiration for the Emperor—Misfortunes of a débutante—The "officers' ball"—Invidious distinctions drawn between nobles and commoners—Class feeling rampant in the army—Its fatal results in the case of Benedek and Clam Gallas—Troubles of poor officers—A change for the better.

AS the Court functions were over when we arrived in the spring I was not presented to the Emperor and Empress till the beginning of the next season. The Empress Elizabeth disliked receiving, detested society in any form, and, whenever possible, deputed her duties in that way to her Grande Maîtresse, a very old lady with much sweet dignity about her, upon whom we were expected to call often and regularly. I think Thursday was the Palace day, and the first time I attended Countess Goess's reception I was rather overcome by the extreme solemnity of it. The hostess sat on a sofa just large enough for two, from which a ring of chairs extended and met opposite her in a perfect circle. She only rose from her seat for Ambassadresses; the rest of us went up and

made a "plongeon" about one third as deep as the curtsey reserved for Royalty. The Grande Maîtresse then extended her hand to be shaken, and, if the lady on the sofa were of lower rank than the new arrival, the seat was instantly vacated, and the latter dropped into it. If the occupier were a native, no matter of what rank, she had to cede it to a Diplomatist's wife, but the foreigner always rose on the arrival of an Austrian and slipped away to the nearest vacant chair. No tea was served, and conversation had to be general and utterly impersonal, three interesting subjects, the Imperial Family, politics, and gossip, being tabooed. One never did overtime on those visits!

It bored the Empress to hold the usual New Year's morning reception for the Diplomatic Corps and Society, so the Grande Maîtresse had to do it for her, by giving a party in the evening. We all thought this a great improvement on the old method; there is no fun in getting into a low gown, court train, and feathers at nine o'clock on a January morning; and as the party at the Hofburg broke up early and no refreshments were served there, somebody always gave a jolly little supper afterwards and dispelled the gloom cast on the opening year by the dreary function.

The first Court Ball took place early in January, and then the Empress had to appear, though she took very little trouble to hide the weariness and distaste which the obligation involved. Dressed in our very smartest frocks (minus the court train), our men fuming and cursing at having to get into their gold lace and cocked hats—how an Englishman hates a uniform!—we used to leave the Embassy about 7.15, so as to be in our places by eight o'clock. An Ambassador's carriage with his green-plumed chasseur on

the box could drive at full speed across the squares of the city; every one else had to go at walking pace; so our good Wicks always got us off in time to have our little brougham start directly behind the Elliots' family coach, and we scampered proudly in its wake all through the town and into the great courtyard of the Hofburg. When one had skipped down on to the crimson carpet and shaken out one's finery, the procession upstairs began, Sir Henry marshalling his forces in due order to pass between the files of gorgeously liveried lacqueys on the stairs and the dazzling rows of Guards in the many ante-rooms above. Austrian uniforms always look as if they have come out of the Arabian Nights. They do not seem to have any connection with fighting—it would be impossible to imagine those panther-skin cloaks, those glove-tight breeches, and tunics of pale blue and silver, of crazy scarlet and gold, on a real battle-field—but in their proper surroundings of beautiful rooms, soft wax lights, and dance music they appealed to one's sense of fitness and were a joy to behold. When we had left them all behind we found ourselves in the famous mirror room, so much used during the Congress of Vienna for the more confidential deliberations that one could not enter it without thinking of the great men who had sat there day after day—Wellington, Talleyrand, Metternich, Hardenberg, Nesselrode, and all the rest—passing a sponge over Napoleon's map of Europe and distributing kingdoms as they thought best. And one thought too of that wild March evening when the crowd of Royalties and notabilities who had followed in the Congress's train, and had been feasting and dancing for six months on end, were gathered in the Court Theatre to see a play called *The Interrupted Dance*, and the last thunderbolt fell on

them—the news that Napoleon had landed in France and was marching towards Paris.

For us the dance did not begin in the mirror room; we took our places (in the alphabetical order laid down by the Congress for diplomatic precedence as soon as it could breathe again after that shock), and then the doors opened and the Emperor and Empress came in with the chief members of their respective households, paused a moment, and then separated, he taking one side of the circle and she the other, passing each other at the bottom of the room and meeting again in their original place at the top, having said a few words to every individual there. This was the occasion on which presentations were made, and I was curious to discover what impression Elizabeth of Austria, whom I had so long known by sight, would make upon me at short range.

Well, the impression was that of a personality too closely limited by concentration on self, and in consequence so artificial as to be "nulle." She had absolutely no atmosphere, no magnetism. The face, still beautiful in feature and colouring, was as expressionless as a fashion plate, schooled to immobility in order to avoid the ageing effects of wrinkles. The hair of which she was so proud was still dressed in the fashion of the sixties, long basket plaits hanging half-way down to her waist behind, and looped up under a broad, high coronet which, as my hairdresser once told me, adds twenty years to a woman's age, whatever it may be. She never turned or bent her head if she could help it, and the effect was that of a person walking about with a photographer's prop fixed to her back. Tall and slight, her figure was laced into one perfectly straight line. At a distance, however, the whole silhouette was striking and vigorous—like the sword-

shaped leaf of an iris, and somehow I always think of her when I see one of those mysterious, imperial flowers. Their faint fine mauve was her favourite colour, and she chose brocades of that tint, shot with silver which recalled the gauzy crystalline film that seems spread over their petals. Night after night one saw her in some combination of the kind which would have been artistic enough but that it was overloaded with diamonds. When a thin, hard woman is corsleted, braced, buckled, necklaced with these frosty splendours, you involuntarily draw back as she approaches—she looks as if she would hurt! One gem the Empress had which I loved to look at, and it was such a favourite of hers that she never appeared in the evening without it, a huge ruby set as the heart of a rose, with smaller ones spreading out for the petals. It made the centre of a berthe, the rest being foliage carried out in diamonds, and it lay like a visible heart pulsing with crimson light, as if to mark the very spot to be pierced by the assassin's dagger on that tragic after-day at Geneva.

When the Empress had to appear at the circles and Court balls she was so bored that one was sorry for her. She spoke English perfectly of course—like everybody else in Vienna—and she had two stock questions which she put without fear or favour to every woman who was presented to her: "Do you ride?" "Have you any children?" This last inquiry had caused a sad scene during one of these diplomatic receptions a little time before our arrival. The wife of an English Secretary, instead of replying when it was put to her, burst into uncontrollable weeping. She had lost her two little ones the year before. But the Empress could not think of anything else to say, and every time I had the honour

of speaking to her opened up with the riding and the nursery. Only once did the conversation start differently. Sir Henry Elliot was away and my husband in charge when the Italian Royalties came to pay a visit, and a circle was held at which I had to take Lady Elliot's place. This threw out Her Majesty's count altogether. "British Embassy, one grey-haired woman, one blonde—where was the grey-haired one?" I saw doubt and perplexity come into her eyes as she halted before me. Had she made a mistake and skipped an Embassy? I made an extra long "plongeon" to give her time to sort me into place, and then, as I slowly "recovered" and came to "first position," we stood facing each other. Then the faintest gleam of a smile came into her eyes, and she whispered "I *cannot* remember who you are!"

I am afraid that I laughed first and explained afterwards, reminding her respectfully of various former occasions when I had come to the Palace with Lady Elliot. She was very sweet, and forgave my mirth quite readily. Indeed, I do not think she ever harboured any rancour against a single human being; she had no malice or spite in her composition, and was always generous—her great failing being the dislike of everything connected with the public duties of her great position, and the absolute indifference to the feelings of her husband's subjects. In this last respect she was often really cruel as well as fatally unwise, but unconsciously so. She lived in a world of her own, the slight strain of eccentricity in her family only affecting her in so far as it rendered her incapable of rightly focussing ethical values, and making her regard all that did not appeal to her strong individual tastes as unworthy of her

attention. Apart from the few persons she really loved, the world was for her a world peopled by unimportant shadows; and so she became a shadow herself, a mere figure-head without power or influence, a misty presence beside the throne of the beloved "Guter Kaiser Franz."

Like her younger sister, the unfortunate Queen of Naples, her ruling passion was her love of riding and all that that implies. The lower classes of the Viennese complained bitterly that she loved horses more than she loved any human being; and, indeed, her sympathy with and her understanding of the noble animals was a gift in itself. There was not an evolution of the "Haute Ecole" which she could not perform with the careless ease of the trained equestrienne; but none such ever had the royal dignity which never forsook Elizabeth of Austria, or the grace which, strangely contrasting with her stiff carriage on other occasions, distinguished her every movement in the saddle. The Emperor used to laugh about her proficiency, giving utterance on one occasion, when things were going badly in the Empire and revolution appeared imminent, to a saying at once caught up by the laughter-loving Viennese: "Never mind, my dear—if they turn us out of the Hofburg we have always a trade to fall back on to earn our living. We will start a circus! I will be the ringmaster, you shall jump through the hoops, and the old woman shall take care of the till!" The "old woman" was the Empress's mother, the wife of Maximilian, Duke in Bavaria (a younger branch of the reigning house), and was noted for her parsimonious ways. These had been partly the result of circumstances, for the Duke was very poor, and his five beautiful daughters were brought

up in Spartan simplicity, in a remote old castle in the mountains where they had very few pleasures except those they could create for themselves, and these were mostly open-air ones. Elizabeth, who became Empress of Austria at sixteen, never lost her love of dogs and horses, or her enjoyment of the beauties of nature; and her younger sister Marie, afterwards Queen of Naples, shared her tastes. All five made what appeared advantageous marriages; but some cloud of doom seems to have hung over the family. Marie's reason was eclipsed by the weight of her misfortunes; the saintly Sophie, the youngest of the five, who married the Duc d'Alençon, was one of the victims of the fire at the Charity Bazaar in Paris; and Elizabeth survived the frightful shock of her son's untimely end only to be struck down herself by the basest of murderers.

With what different eyes would one regard one's fellow-beings could one know of what lies in store for them, how indulgently would one judge their little faults, how gladly note the brighter and sweeter traits of their characters! I used to meet the Empress of Austria morning after morning in the "Prater," where I drove with my little boys. In the great leafy avenue, so empty at that hour, it was beautiful to see that graceful figure on the superb Irish hunter coming towards me, all alone, under the trees, whose branches let flecks of sunshine through to dance on her hair and on the chestnut's glossy coat. She looked really happy then; there was a dreamy peace in the lovely eyes, and the silent mysterious lips smiled as they never smiled at other times. Yet I used to laugh at her for carrying a little fan to protect her cheek from the sun! When I read of how she lay dead there in Geneva, covered with the white

roses she had gathered herself that morning, I could have asked her pardon on my knees!

It is the fortune and also the misfortune of really striking personalities to be as much in harmony with one set of surroundings as they are out of it with another. Elizabeth of Austria in the open air on her favourite horse was a very different woman from the bored, indifferent lady to whom we made our curtseys at the ball in the Hofburg. To tell the truth, those were not gay entertainments for any but the young people, and even they grumbled at having to dance on a marble floor instead of the polished parquet which they found everywhere else. Lady Elliot had advised me to abjure dancing while in Vienna if I wished to enjoy myself in other ways. The "Contessen" (as the young girls are called, whatever may be their parents' rank) rule the little social world completely, and bitterly resent it if a young married woman poaches on their preserves and carries off their partners. The few girls belonging to the Diplomatic Corps were no better treated, for if a Viennese asked one of them to dance before he had fulfilled his obligations in that way to every fair compatriot who had a claim on him, not one of the latter would speak to him for the whole evening, and, worse still, his name would be omitted when next her noble Papa and Mamma were sending out invitations for an entertainment.

The arrangements at parties were very curious, each age having a room set apart for it and never infringing on the liberties of the others. The "Contessen Zimmer" was carefully selected; it had to be large, near the ballroom, and was not to be passed through by other guests. Hither the girls betook themselves immediately on arriving at the house; the young men followed them,

brought them out to dance, and took them back the moment the dance was over; all introductions were made by the girls themselves, the daughter of the house, if there were one, actively doing her duties in that way. No married woman ever crossed the threshold. Only once, I remember, Princess Metternich, impatient to speak to her daughter, sailed in in her own imperious way. She was greeted by an outburst of protests. "Da kommt eine Mutter!"[1] all the girls exclaimed in shocked unison, and she wisely beat a retreat. All this sounds as if the young ladies wished to indulge in greater liberty of deportment than the elders would have approved of, but quite the contrary was the case. The "doyennes" of the dovecote exercised the most vigilant supervision over the proprieties, and no tête-à-têtes were permitted. If a man ventured to draw a girl into a corner for a little flirtation, one of the others bore down upon them at once and broke it up sternly. Only engaged people might indulge in private talk, and I remember that at a ball at our own Embassy, when young Count Clam Gallas was seen in earnest conversation with pretty Marie Hoyos apart from the rest, actually in another room, the happy termination of the love affair thus brought about had to be announced before the end of the evening.

Foreigners found it difficult to understand all these hard-and-fast regulations. At a great ball given at the Austrian Embassy in Rome during a visit of the German Emperor, there being no convenient apartment to set aside for the girls, a space was roped off for them with red cord in the chief reception-room, and they were all sent in behind it, much to the indignation of Italian and French

[1] "There comes a mother!"

mothers accustomed to have their lambs remain beside them the whole evening except when actually dancing.

At the Hofburg, they stood in a group, half-way down the huge hall, that they might have the common privilege of being in the Sovereigns' "presence." The "Weisse Saal," the scene of all the greater meetings of the Congress of Vienna, was one of the most beautiful ball-rooms I have ever seen, spacious and perfect in its proportions, and forming with its soft old white-and-gold walls a charming background for all the glitter and colour that filled it on such occasions. At the upper end was a broad raised dais, with seats for the Imperial family, who, led by the Emperor and Empress, formed up when our audience was over, in the mirror salon, where they had received us, and, preceded by goldsticks, swept past us into the ball-room, we following them obediently all in pairs, right up to the steps of the dais, between the splendid lines that opened out before them. Every one else was in place already, the Viennese great ladies all in a group on the right of the dais, the girls, looking like a flock of pretty butterflies, half-way down on the same side, the crowds of men in national costumes and military uniforms filling up all the rest of the floor space except that reserved for the Diplomatists to the left of the dais, where we had to "stay put" till supper-time.

There are tall, fluted columns at this upper end, and between them two small and most inhospitable marble seats allowed the noblest of the native Dowagers and the wives of Ambassadors to sit down. Every one else had to stand all night. Dear Princess Reuss and Comtesse Robilant used to spread out their finery and make room for me to sit down behind and between them, when I looked as if I were going to faint, screening the awful

breach of decorum by putting up their fans, and no one can say how grateful I was for those few inches of resting place after standing on my high heels till they felt like spear-points! There was a little Frenchwoman, the Duchesse d'Abrantès, whose place was generally beside me—we were really very good friends—and who rather resented this favouritism. "Oh, la bienheureuse!" she used to exclaim. "C'est moi qui voudrais être sur les jambes d'une autre!" This vivacious little lady had an enthusiastic admiration for the Emperor. One evening she and I were standing near him as he was conversing in low tones with Baroness Vetsera. Suddenly the Duchess, seizing my arm, exclaimed, "Oh! for me there is only one man in the world—the Emperor. What a perfect gentleman! Just look at his little feet!" His Majesty caught the remark, his glance travelled down to the dapper patent leathers which had called it forth, and then rested on us with a smile of intense amusement.

In spite of fatigue, I found constant amusement in watching the ways of this new world. Even at Court balls the girls permitted no one to forget their interests; and grave Papas who at other times managed the affairs of State, had to be on hand to take charge of the cotillon favours which their daughters had obtained. Not a ribbon, not a rosette must be lost; above all, the bouquets must be kept safely together; and for this purpose Papa's opera hat had to be distended, and made to serve as a flower-basket, from which, if he lost one posy, woe to him! It was a funny sight to behold Prince Metternich, with his snow-white hair and whiskers, carefully carrying his hat in one hand, and trying to keep his popular daughter's abundant spoils from spilling over

or—being stolen by other girls! For, I am sorry to say, the spirit of emulation carried them quite to those lengths, in view of a solemn ceremony which took place when Lent had closed the dancing season. Then the brigade of Contessen met at the house of one of their acknowledged leaders, and each girl brought all the bouquets she had received since Christmas. These were counted, the owner congratulated or sympathized with according as her luck had been good or bad; and when coffee and bonbons without end had been disposed of, a great auto-da-fé was made, and the withered flowers disappeared—like all other vanities—in smoke.

I remember one poor little débutante whose whole harvest consisted of only two bouquets. Yet so strict was the rule that she dared not refrain from bringing them! I fancy this was the same Hungarian girl who suffered a terrible blow at the beginning of her season. She had been kept all her life in the remote castle of her ancestors, and when she was seventeen was brought to Vienna to be presented at Court. The frock had come from Paris, and was a dream of beauty; but when the time came to put it on in Vienna and go to the Hofburg, it was discovered that the maid had forgotten to pack the bodice! *That* had been left in Hungary! The poor child cried all night, and her mourning family kept her company. So far as I remember, her "coming out" had to be postponed for a year, since she could go nowhere till she had been presented, and presentations were only made at the first Court ball, the small and select one. The second (there were but two in each season) was the only occasion in the whole year when officers who had not sixteen quarterings were entertained at the Palace, and that

in such humiliating conditions that we, of another nationality and another way of thinking, wondered how they could be induced to come at all. A scarlet cord divided the lower end of the ball-room from the upper, and behind this cord they had to stand herded together the whole evening, watching the dancing they were forbidden to share, and never honoured by so much as a look or a nod from any member of the Imperial family or the "smart" society. The Empress detested this particular function more than any other, and once so far lost her self-control as to exclaim on entering the room, "Es ist heiss—und es stinkt!"

There was some foundation for this latter assertion, for the smell of Austrian military boot-leather is so overpowering that one fancies it might almost serve to scare the country's foes away. When supper-time came the officers' refreshments were served in a great hall reserved for them. I had commented sharply on the way they were treated, and the man I was talking to said, "Let me show you something, and you will see that it would be impossible to let them mix with us—they are wild beasts!" So he led me to their deserted supper-room—and though I could not give up my contention, the sight convinced me that, at any rate, the despised guests had taken their revenge. The long tables were absolutely stripped. Whatever could not be eaten on the spot, or stuffed into pockets or caps to take home, was strewn on the floor. It looked as if a horde of savages had just swept through the place. But—à qui la faute? The gulf which separates the commoner from the noble all over the Empire is even more insolently marked in the Army than elsewhere. There is no brotherhood of arms, no tie of any kind

between the two classes there. Except on official matters they hold no intercourse. The noble moves in his own serene sphere, and is sure of having his shortcomings overlooked on account of his birth; the other, who may be a far better soldier, lives in his own middle-class surroundings, has the hardest work to do, and knows that whenever possible his better's mistakes will be charged to him.

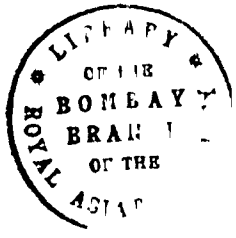
The most flagrant instance of this unworthy favouritism was afforded by the story of Königgrätz, and the treatment meted out respectively to Count Clam Gallas and General Benedek after the defeat. Benedek was a commoner, and the men of Clam Gallas' class were sore and sulky at having to serve under him. Had Clam Gallas obeyed orders, and carried out his easy task of arresting the progress of the Prussian First Army in the mountainous country of Bohemia, thus preventing its junction with the Second Army before Königgrätz, the course of history might have run differently. But he would not. The First Army, to its own surprise, was scarcely conscious of his presence on the scene, so perfunctory were his attempts to impede its course; the negligence or stupidity of another commander, Gablentz (called "der schöne Gablentz," on account of his good looks), completed the disaster. When Benedek's last orders—to close in a little nearer to the base—reached him, he was too careless or too much out of temper to understand them, and committed the fatal mistake of drawing his men out in the wrong direction, and thus placing the enemy between himself and the main body of the Austrians. When all was over—and lost—Gablentz (who afterwards shot himself in despair over losses on the Bourse) escaped without reprimand; Clam Gallas was

shielded, decorated, promoted; and Benedek, the faithful, chivalrous gentleman whose heroic silence under unmerited reproach saved his Emperor from public responsibility for the country's misfortunes, was disgraced and dismissed from the Service. He bore that martyrdom of obloquy for sixteen years, and died without a murmur, while we, in Vienna, were meeting Count Clam Gallas, the man of unstained reputation, at every entertainment.

This hateful class feeling is the canker of the Austrian Army. The Service itself, in painful contrast to that of other countries, confers no distinction; no interest is taken by the superiors in the thousands of poor officers who, while striving to do their duty, find it almost impossible to live decently on their meagre pay, and, in consequence, become the prey of Jew moneylenders, whose exactions constantly drive them to despair. I had a little German teacher, the daughter of a General who had so distinguished himself in the wars of the earlier part of the century as to have been created Baron of ——, a town in Italy which had been the scene of a memorable Austrian victory. He and his gentle old wife lived in a wretched little apartment in Vienna, depending largely for maintenance on their daughter's work. They never went anywhere; they were too poor to offer a cup of coffee to their friends; the mother and daughter had no clothes to permit them to attend the public shows and festivities so dear to the Viennese. The only son went into the Army, got into the hands of the Jews, saw no hope of deliverance, and blew his brains out. He was only one of many, poor boy!

The evil has at last reached such frightful proportions that in this year of grace, 1910, the Government has announced its decision to set aside the enormous sum

of three million pounds to redeem officers' debts. It is to be hoped that this energetic measure indicates a resolve to improve the condition of the Army generally; for until some tie of honourable comradeship is established between the different classes which compose it, no success can attend its operations abroad. Without unity there can be no strength.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CHAPTER XXXIII

A CHAPTER OF PAGEANTS

Nationality and Hans Makart—An "Alt Deutsch" residence—Makart devises the pageant in the Riding School—Holy Thursday at the Hofburg—Procession of the Blessed Sacrament—The Hapsburgs' loyalty to the Church—A supper "manqué"—The Sovereigns wash the paupers' feet and serve their dinner—Popularity of the Emperor—The burning of the Ring Theatre—Description of an eye-witness—Fearful loss of life—Obsequies by night—The Emperor closes all the theatres—Inspects them himself and orders proper exits to be made—John, coachman, saves his mistress's life for the second time—Visit of the Prince of Wales—A gay dinner and an ugly habit—Friendship with the Viennese—Baroness Haymerle's revolt—Baron Haymerle's sudden death—Trials of a Representative's wife—A specimen of the new French Diplomacy—Baron Rothschild and his princely neighbour—A cardboard truffle—"Mademoiselle's" first effort in German.

THE sentiment of nationality which swept over Europe in the eighties made itself very strongly felt in Vienna, and to some extent subdued the internecine hostility of race to race which has since more than once threatened to break up the Empire. I think the painter Hans Makart did more for the general peace than any one else. He devoted himself to restoring the taste for all that was "Alt Deutsch" in costume, furniture, and decoration; and if "Alt Deutsch" was in reality not so rich and harmonious as he made it appear, no one could quarrel with him for satisfying his countrymen's love of beauty and colour, while gently leading

their taste away from the unreasonableness and artificiality which the Second Empire had inaugurated, and which vitiated the judgment of the fashionable world for so many years after the Second Empire was a thing of the past. There had been a strong reaction against the crude aniline dyes which for some reason the Empress Eugénie consented to blind us all with in the sixties. The Metternich greens, the metallic blues, the sickening "Magenta" and "Solferino," had given place to anæmic shades, misnamed "High Art" ones. "Turquoise malade," "Eau de Nil," "Réséda," faded pinks and dirty yellows were still holding sway, in England particularly, when Makart began to spread his canvases with tints of crimson and gold and white, pure and strong as those of nature; and when he had painted the portraits of a few beautiful women in costumes of his own devising, his compatriots went crazy over his methods and permitted themselves such orgies of richness and colouring as, a few hundred years earlier, would have been considered sufficient excuse for sumptuary laws.

Already before this date an artistic Archduke had amused himself with reproducing in the castle of Laxenburg a precise copy of an Alt Deutsch feudal residence, where every detail of architecture and furniture was faithfully carried out on historic patterns. To modern eyes nothing could be more sympathetic or beautiful than the result; the canker of our day is caprice and instability, and we all, consciously or unconsciously, long for the massive repose and dignity of a fixed and impregnable home. Here all that was suggested in a superlative degree: the spacious stone rooms hung with rich, warm tapestries and carpeted with skins, the huge dower chests filled with fine homespun linen; the Lady's Bower, from

whose deep window-seats the châtelaine could look down on the fortified flower garden while she worked at her embroidery or rocked the stately old cradle wherein reposed her child, all seemed to tell of peace, calmness, and endless leisure; but the nature of some of her tasks was revealed to have been rather a heavy one when the "Spinning Room" was reached. This was a circular apartment where the light fell cold and even from one large aperture in the domed ceiling; all around the walls ran a narrow stone bench—the most uncomfortable seat imaginable—on which thirty handmaidens had to sit for just so many hours a day, spinning flax and wool to be woven into the materials which would provide clothing for the entire huge household. In the centre, just under the light, was a small raised platform on which was a marble seat and a kind of lectern. This was My Lady's place, whence she could keep a sharp eye on the spinners and set them a good example by working industriously herself. The lectern suggested reading aloud, but I imagine there was very little of that, for the only books in the castle were "Books of Hours," much illuminated and heavily clasped and bound. How welcome in that place must have been the advent of the minstrel or story-teller when he came to break the long day with romance and song!

Far, far below was another apartment which recalled the grimmer side of feudal life, a deep, cold dungeon, its dark vaults upheld by heavy round pillars, between which thin shafts of daylight crept timidly from narrow slits far overhead, just above the level of the outer ground. Here realism had been carried out so far as to place the figure of a poor captive knight, leaning dejectedly against a pillar to which he was attached by heavy chains. He was

so lifelike that I was taken by surprise, and made an exclamation of startled pity—and then my guide pressed his foot on a stone in the floor, and instantly the unhappy prisoner, with a heavy jangling of his chains, raised his clasped hands and uttered hollow, blood-curdling groans. The mechanism was perfect, but the atrocious taste of the thing was unpardonable. It made all the rest seem cheap and tawdry as a "décor de théâtre." My hands went out to feel whether the castle walls were not made of papier-mâché!

Makart's methods of bringing the past before our eyes were more artistic, and, as far as the general public was concerned, were splendidly vindicated in a pageant got up in the "Reit Schule" for some charity in which the Empress was interested. To please her—and incidentally the whole of society, which had enthusiastically followed her lead in that direction—the show consisted as much of horsemanship as of costumes. For some six weeks beforehand all who were to take part in it spent many hours a day in the riding school rehearsing the different manœuvres to be executed. Since the horses had to be thoroughly broken in to them as well as the riders, some very arduous work was got through, but the result was something surprisingly beautiful when it was at last attained. Many of the performers were already familiar with the movements of the "Haute Ecole," and when unable to ride abroad on account of bad weather were in the habit of betaking themselves to the riding school to follow the example of the Empress and emulate her daring and graceful evolutions.

The place was vast, well covered in, and very finely proportioned, containing tiers of galleries all round, after the fashion of a circus. Makart's unerring eye saw in it

a fit theatre for the unique fête, and he rejoiced at the opportunity thus given him of massing colours and costumes. On that particular evening it was crowded to the roof; the tribune for the Imperial spectators occupied one end, the rest being divided into boxes as at the Opera. Of course Edward and Josef Strauss were there with their band—the Strausses were a part of daily life in Vienna—and had composed some stirring strains for the occasion. To the accompaniment of these a great procession filed in and made the tour of the arena, such a procession as I shall never see again, for it was composed of the very flower of the Empire, the most beautiful women, the handsomest as well as the most famous men, in fifteenth and sixteenth century costumes of dazzling splendour, each wearing a king's ransom in jewels and mounted on the most perfect thoroughbreds that money can secure. When our eyes, dazzled at first, could take in the details of the scene, what struck us most was the astonishing increase of beauty which these costumes bestowed on their women wearers. We had long admired those lovely faces—beauty is a birthright in Austria and Hungary and Poland, and there was hardly a plain woman in the whole society—but dressed by Makart they looked like a painter's dream. As they passed with their equally striking cavaliers, and were recognized and hailed by their friends, the thunder of applause that broke forth drowned the music of the band.

Even the Empress's face was transfigured with delight, touched by envy when the real riding began a few minutes later; she was longing to be down there among them, putting her favourite horse through those perfect figures. For when the parade was over and the great gates at the far end had closed on the last couple, Strauss began the

prelude from "Der Lustige Krieg," and in a moment a great quadrille was being danced before our eyes by mounted dancers, every step and turn perfect in time and symmetry. Then the wonder of the equestrianism showed itself, for these were not circus horses, but high-spirited hunters taught with endless love and patience by their own riders to wheel and rear and bow their heads, waltz round each other, canter to the quick music and dance airily to the slow; and they seemed to enjoy it thoroughly, arching their beautiful necks and turning back an ear for the word of command, not in the least disturbed by the gold-embroidered trappings and heavy jewelled saddles and bridles which had been laid upon them.

One face still comes back to me out of that crowd with such endearing loveliness that I have often prayed Time to lay a gentle hand on it—the face of the young Baroness Vetsera, the sister-in-law of poor Marie, herself one of the most attractive girls in the whole town. I forget what the other girl's name was before her marriage—the Vetseras by no means belonged to the highest nobility—but when she was present it was impossible to look at any one else. I always called her the White Rose, for her exquisite little face had the transparent whiteness of a rose shone through by the sun. Every tint was as unblemished as the complexion of a year-old infant, her eyes were of the blue which history ascribes to those of the Duchesse de Longueville, a deep, dancing sapphire, and the face was framed in hair of purest pale gold, burnished and soft as a baby's. Makart had dressed her in pale green velvet, the gold-laced bodice and sumptuous Venetian sleeves showing a neck and arms of snowy perfection, and the great plumed hat and golden hair-net did not hide the gold of the hair. Every clasp and buckle of

dress and harness shone with jewels, and the whole picture, as she put her beautiful horse through the mazes of the different dances, was one never to be forgotten.

As for the men, I thought I had seen all that my eyes would bear in the way of costumes at the Court balls already, for every great house has its own historic one, and on these occasions the women were almost eclipsed by their partners; Romeos and Mercutios in rose-coloured satin or white brocade, or crimson damasked velvet, the close-fitting tunic belted in with turquoises and diamonds, the short, fly-away cloak edged with costly fur, the slashed breeches ending in top boots of gilt leather, heeled with golden spurs. So I was not prepared for the extra gorgeousness of their appearance after they had passed under Makart's hands. It seemed as if they had rejoiced in having for once an opportunity to wear as many jewels as they liked; they have a love of jewels equal to that of any Oriental potentate, and that night they had put on so many that they shimmered as they moved. Yet I learnt afterwards that they had lent many to their women friends.

The most fanciful part of the entertainment consisted in a driving competition which took place towards the end of the evening, when eight low chariots resembling troikas, each drawn by eight horses, were driven in geometrical arabesques, interlacing and crossing in a variety of patterns over the freshly tanned floor of the arena.

The gracefully draped little carriages were as much carved and gilt as the famous coach of Louis XIV. From the back of each trailed a length of velvet, gold fringed and heavy, displaying the owner's coat-of-arms in richest embroidery. The eight little Hungarian horses wore

trappings of the same, and each man had his colour, the most delicate of all, a pale sky-blue, marking the equipage of Prince Thurn und Taxis, an elderly man who had lost an eye in the service of his country, and who was certainly the most accomplished whip I have ever seen. His grey hair seemed rather an ornament added to the rest of his splendid costume, and the patch over one eye did not prevent him from driving with such mathematical precision that when it came to the single turns, where each charioteer had the whole arena to himself, the wheels passed every time in the original furrows, and, when he turned and disappeared through the gates, the most exquisite patterns, clean-cut as if with a pencil, were left unblurred and unmixed on the yellow tan. The applause that broke forth at the sight was something he must have remembered pleasantly for the rest of his life.

As my thoughts wander back through memory's picture gallery a still more beautiful spectacle than that I have just described, and one of most solemn import, returns to it, that of Holy Thursday at the Hofburg. We were all invited to attend, and on our arrival were conducted to the reception-rooms on the first floor, whence from the great open windows we could look down into the vast inner court of the palace. It was a glorious morning, everything was bathed in sunshine, and sweet smells of spring flowers and budding woods came floating in from the outside country. The court was lined with the corps I always remember as the "Panther-skin Guards," the sun striking on their gay uniforms and shining helmets till they were almost too bright to look at. Everything was very quiet and still when the first low notes of a sacred chant fell on our ears, and from the ancient chapel at the far end there

debouched a long line of ecclesiastics, two by two, carrying lighted tapers and intoning the "Pange, Lingua, Gloriosi—Corporis Mysterium . . ." which always accompanies the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament. The Prelates' robes took on more cheerful tints in the morning sunshine, their gold crosses gleamed mystically through wafts of incense, and the well-known anthem—sung to the oldest tune that the world yet hears—rolled up triumphantly to the sky. The long files had almost gone round the courtyard and the first of the train was disappearing under the arcade when the Primate emerged, carrying the Sacred Host in Its Monstrance, the white-and-gold canopy protecting it borne by four Archdukes, while the censers swung out their clouds of perfume in amber-tinted vapour that seemed to hang lovingly on the warm, bright air.

Immediately behind the Primate walked the Emperor and Empress, he in full field-marshal's uniform, his noble grey head bare and reverently bowed as he guarded and followed the King of Kings. The Empress in the beautiful Court dress of her country, her silver-and-violet train borne by pages of honour, her gold-brown hair shining softly under her white lace veil and diamond crown, her bare arms and neck taking the sun bravely on the great crown jewels, walked beside him as reverently and prayerfully. Each carried a tall wax candle, as did every other person in the procession except the Christ-bearer, and the thousand flickering flames burnt clear and yellow in spite of the noonday light, like true earthly loves trying faithfully to find their way to heaven.

After the Sovereigns came the whole Household, men and women all in full court dress, Generals, Ministers, guardsmen—such a concourse of devoutly powerful fol-

lowing as the world seldom sees, for the House of Hapsburg, whatever its other losses or misfortunes, has retained the best gift of all, an ardent loyalty to the Church, and no one was ever permitted to speak slightingly of her claims within hearing of any member of the Imperial family. One noticed this devout religiousness in little ways that were very impressive. I remember a ball where many of the Princesses were present, given at our Embassy on the eve of a very special fast day. Had the hosts remembered this, supper would have been served before midnight, but they, being Protestants, overlooked the date, and great was their chagrin to find that in the small supper-room reserved for the Royalties no one of them would touch a morsel of food or even drink a glass of wine. They were sweet and charming, talked incessantly, and expressed the greatest appreciation of all the arrangements, trying hard to put the disappointed hostess at her ease—but the rule was the rule, and even the youngest Archduchess, hot with dancing and healthily hungry, resisted all temptations to eat and drink.

A touching ceremony concluded the rites at the Hofburg on Holy Thursday, the "Washing of the Feet." This took place in an inner hall of the palace, which I had not seen before, a high, spacious room with a raised tribune running along one wall. To this we were conducted and installed in our places, whence we could look down on two long tables each laid with twelve covers for the invited guests. Then the guests were brought in, the oldest poor men and women in Vienna, twelve of each, certified to be respectable and needy. That was a strange procession indeed; the dear old things, beaming with delight, dressed with spotless cleanliness and care, were supported to their places by humble friends who

then retired to the end of the hall. When all were seated the Emperor and Empress came in, attended as before by their respective Households ; the Emperor turned to the men, the Empress to the women. The guests' footgear having been already removed by their friends, the Sovereigns went down on their knees and washed the old feet devoutly, the ewers and towels being held for them by Archdukes and Archduchesses. As the Emperor went down the line he chatted and laughed with the aged men—there were several centenarians of both sexes —and the expression of rapturous joy and humility was worth going far to see. The Empress was impassive and silent as usual, and indeed there was some excuse for her, for she must have been very tired after going through the long ceremony in the chapel and then the procession, all in her court dress and heavy jewelled crown.

When the Washing of the Feet was over, a sumptuous repast was served to the old people by the Sovereigns. I had wondered why so much space was given for each place at the tables, but now I understood ; for each one had been provided a dinner which would generously feed a large family. Every dish was complete for each, fish and fowl, big roast joint, and ornamented sweet, with every accompanying dainty which poor people love, besides various bottles of good wine ; but, with the delicacy of truly understanding charity, the poor people were not expected to eat their dinner under those august eyes. If I remember rightly, they took their soup, to restore them again after so much excitement, drank a glass or so of wine, and then all the rest, including the china and silver which had been set out for them, was carefully packed in large boxes provided for the purpose, and handed over to their companions—

to be taken home and enjoyed in the ease of privacy. The last gift of all was bestowed by the kind Royal hosts—a richly embroidered purse for each, containing twelve gold pieces; and then the old people, expressing their thanks with much effusion—some of them were crying with happiness—were led away by their friends and relatives to the carriages waiting for them, and the good Kaiser and his spouse withdrew to lay aside their garments of state and rest from their labours.

The Emperor was—and is—adored by his subjects. His delightful personality attracted all who had the good fortune to come in contact with him, and his kind heart always told him the right thing to say and do. I think the warmest corner in that heart was kept for "das heilige Land Tyrol," where he took refuge when the Viennese turned rebels in 1848, and where every man, woman, and child would gladly lay down life for "Unser guter Kaiser Franz." But he loved his Viennese too; their sins were quickly forgiven, and their welfare was a matter to which he gave constant thought. This was especially shown after the burning of the "Ring Theatre," a frightful disaster which cast a gloom over the town for months. Theatre-going was the national passion of high and low. The fashionable dinner-hour was an uncomfortably early one, six—sometimes half-past five o'clock—in order not to interfere with play or opera afterwards; and dinner guests were diffident about keeping their hosts at home beyond nine. As for the lower classes, a great percentage of their wages and earnings went for this purpose; and on special holidays as many as three performances were given—a terrible tax on troupe and employés. Sarah Bernhardt had just arrived, and had engaged the Ring Theatre—

I think her season was to open the day after one such festival—and we were all looking forward to the treat in store for us, when towards 8 p.m. the news that the Ring Theatre was on fire spread consternation through the city. It was the third show given that day, yet before the curtain went up the place was packed to the roof. One of the Archdukes was there, and one of his aides-de-camp gave me a graphic description of the beginning of the disaster.

They were sitting quietly in their box, commenting on the overcrowded house, when, without an instant's warning, the drop-curtain blew out towards the audience, and was carried up nearly to the ceiling, one vast square sheet of flame. The two gentlemen got the Archduke out without much difficulty, the box being a central one and close to the grand entrance, and, in spite of his resistance, dragged him down the street some way from the building. Then he broke from them and rushed back, declaring that he must and would help in the rescue—every hand would be needed. But when they reached the spot a cordon of soldiers was drawn up round the theatre, through the roof of which the flames were now bursting to the sky; and so servile is the respect for the feelings of Royalty in that part of the world that the officers in charge assured the Archduke again and again that everybody had escaped, and that there was nothing for His Imperial Highness to be troubled about. The very doors had been shut so as to avoid any unpleasant shock to his feelings! It took quite twenty minutes to persuade him to leave the spot and go home; and meanwhile some eight or nine hundred beings were left to burn to death without an effort being made to help them. Strange to say, those

who escaped—having reached the corridor before the inner separating wall gave way—said that the worst horror they encountered was the total darkness in which the struggling masses in the narrow space were attempting to find exits on that unfamiliar ground. Many were saved and saved others because they carried matches, and thus found their way to the windows and balconies with which the front was profusely ornamented; but the loss of life was fearful.

When, the next day, the flames finally died down, the space was found choked with a mass of charred humanity unrecognizable and impossible to enumerate. Feeling ran so high that the remains, piled on endless strings of carts, and guarded by a large force of troops, had to be removed and buried at night to prevent some popular outburst of fury, for it was now known that but for the presence of the Archduke—who, kind and gallant gentleman, was only anxious to aid the sufferers—measures would have been taken sooner, and hundreds of people would have escaped an appalling death. As it was, the desolation was terrible. Whole families had been swallowed up, leaving not a single member behind; and some other cases were still worse, for some of the working people had gone leaving their tiny children asleep at home, and it was feared that more than one of these poor babies starved to death before it was discovered by neighbours or the police.

The day after the fire the Emperor issued an edict closing every theatre in the city till after the inquiry on the circumstances which had led to this shocking misfortune. When these were examined they brought to light the fact that the watchmen, firemen, and other employés upon whom the safety of the public devolved,

had, many of them, worn out with the fatigue of the two preceding performances that day, absented themselves from their posts. There was a device in the vaulted roof of the theatre by which copious streams of water could be let loose over the whole auditorium, but the men who should have been stationed by the valves to turn them on were not there, and so on and so on. The actors and stage hands were more fortunate than the general public, but many lost their lives, the outbreak of the fire having been so instantaneous and overwhelming.

One friend of mine told me that on this occasion her life had been saved for the second time by a curious accident. She was dressed to go to the theatre, and had to wait some twenty minutes because of the unpunctuality of her English coachman. When at last he appeared she wasted another few minutes in giving him a violent scolding before getting into the brougham. By the time they reached the theatre it was in flames. Precisely the same thing occurred some years earlier when the theatre in Nice burnt down, and my friend said that henceforth she should never dare to reprove John, whatever inconvenience his unpunctuality might cause her—his hours would have to be hers!

A day or two after the disaster the Emperor, accompanied by the best experts available, visited every place of public entertainment in the town, had separate plans drawn up whereby each one could be provided with a multiplicity of safety exits, and injunctions issued forbidding any representations till they should be installed. The unfortunate proprietors and managers were very hard hit, for even after all improvements the public were very shy of theatre-going. I myself did not enter one for many months, and it was only the temptation of hearing

and seeing Pauline Lucca in her own *Carmen* that at last induced me to go once more to the opera-house—a building which before had always struck me as being as safe as it was beautiful, and where I had spent many an enchanted hour.

I think it was in this same year that we had a visit from our own Prince of Wales, as he then was. He came to Vienna incognito, apparently for pleasure only, and certainly the few days of his stay afforded a great deal of that to those who had the good fortune to meet him. He wished to be quite independent, and put up at the Grand Hotel, but he had so many friends in the town that every possible moment was bespoken within a few hours of his arrival.

One evening, of course, was promised to the Embassy, and Lady Elliot determined to make it memorable for the Prince in the way of pleasantness at least. No single official was invited to the dinner. Instead she gathered together the very prettiest and brightest women she could find, many of them, of course, being his personal friends already. The result was rather a unique beauty show. In the Society circle there were so many attractive faces that selection was merely difficult on account of the "embarras de choix." The Embassy was well adapted for such entertainments, and the great dining-room presented a charming sight—a garden of flowers of more than one kind, bright eyes and bright jewels shining under the softly radiant lights, everybody looking delighted, and the talk so vivacious that it soon drowned the strains of the band in the ball-room beyond. The Prince was in one of his very happiest moods, and kept everybody laughing with his good stories and quaint remarks. He was particularly pleased, too, with the dinner, and sent

a special messenger to the chef to say so. One characteristic trait struck me very much. As the procession formed to go into dinner Lady Elliot prepared to head it with him.

"Not a bit of it!" the Prince exclaimed. "I want to have the pleasure of seeing them all pass first." So we had to file in in front of him, and he and the hostess brought up the rear in the usual way. And after dinner the usual shock to one's artistic appreciations was administered when eighteen or twenty charming, refined young women trooped into the smoking-room, selected large, strong cigars, and stuck them into their pretty mouths.

Nobody can quarrel with the ordinary foreign custom of passing round cigarettes with the coffee in the drawing-room, whence the men slip away in twos and threes when they feel the need of a stronger smoke. It precludes the instant separation of the sexes and consequent break-up of the social atmosphere established during dinner, and there is no suggestion of roughness or rowdiness in the sight of dainty ladies *who know how to do it* taking a few whiffs of a delicate cigarette. Also the calming, digestive effect of the little smoke is particularly beneficial to women, and enables them to enjoy the rest of the evening far more than they otherwise would. But the cigar is an abomination, and during all my stay in Vienna I could never get over the repulsion inspired by the sight of it in a feminine mouth, especially when the delinquent was in full evening dress, covered with jewels, wearing hothouse flowers, and looking—till the fatal moment—like a flower herself. There was something even more portentous about the aspect of the dowagers, with whom, against all etiquette, I often

elected to sit at evening parties, in the room set apart for them. They were much better company than the "jeunes femmes," in whose ranks I belonged. All the interesting old gentlemen used to come and talk to them, and they were very kind to me, being rather flattered at my evident preference for their society.

They used to sit in arm-chairs round large tables on which bonbons and boxes of cigars were placed, and these dear old great ladies, pious mothers of families, smoked Havanas solemnly and sedulously through the whole evening. I believe there is only one other country in Europe where the same ugly habit prevails, a country I have never visited—Spain. But if we are to believe the assertions of the author of that deeply thoughtful yet brilliant book "Pequeñezas," it is accompanied there by one much uglier, a constant consumption of spirituous liquor, a degenerate taste from which my dear Viennese were entirely free.

Of course the term, in this connection, includes the members of the various nationalities of which the Empire is composed. Among them the Poles and the Hungarians appealed to me most. The Hungarians, in spite of their semi-Oriental origin, have much in common with the best characteristics of English people, and are always glad to make friends with us. They did not as a rule share the sentiments of the "Gott-sei-danks"; they spoke our language quite as fluently as their own, and the young people were fresh, breezy, and simple as English boys and girls, brought up like them with much open-air freedom and enjoying the healthy out-of-door pleasures more than anything else. When I was among them very little was heard of the democratic and radical elements which have given so much

trouble in recent years; politics were entirely banished from social life, and I shall never forget the mournful lamentations of Baroness Haymerle, when, her husband being a Cabinet Minister, she was obliged to invite all the members of the Diet and the Government to her ball. "Twelve hundred black coats!" she wailed. "What is my poor house going to look like?"

I felt as if we had a kind of connection with the Haymerles because my mother had found it convenient to let her house to them for a time when Haymerle was the Ambassador to the Quirinal, an appointment which incidentally aroused a violent storm in the Court tea-cup. Neither husband nor wife was "Hof-fähig" by birth; he as a distinguished official had been received at the Hofburg, but its doors had been obstinately closed against the Baroness. Being a woman of much spirit, she resented the slight; and when her husband was about to proceed to Rome, she refused to accompany him to a foreign Court without having first been presented to her own Sovereign. Arguments, explanations, conjugal entreaties, all left her unmoved. Haymerle would not undertake the heavy social duties of the post without his wife's assistance, and at last she had her way, but the victory did not add to her popularity in Vienna. All sympathies went out to her, however, when poor Baron Haymerle died suddenly in the midst of his work one morning—so suddenly that his wife barely reached him in time for a last look of recognition. He had worked too hard—the portfolio of Foreign Affairs was a fearfully heavy one to carry just then—had had a slight cold for a day or two, and then the overtaxed heart gave out, as so often happens in such cases, before it was possible for the doctors to

come to his aid. The Baroness retired to the country soon afterwards to devote herself to her charming little girl, and our world saw her no more.

Of the Hungarians the Pejaczewiczs were our greatest friends, and when with them it was hard to remember the difference of nationality between us. Count Pejaczewicz had some great charge at Court, which necessitated their being in or near Vienna almost all the year round like ourselves, and no party at the Embassy or little gathering at my own house was complete without the two girls, Franziska and Lili, radiant blondes with what we should call truly Saxon colouring, and a capacity for fun and laughter which was an absolute inspiration to tired people. Another intimate was Lili Kinsky, who could be intensely amusing, but whose wit was a little too razor-edged to be always harmless; but she also was very English in most of her ways.

One or two of our countrywomen had married Austrians, and took easily to the life and the race; one of these was Countess Lützow, who was exceedingly kind to me, as was another Dowager of British origin, Countess Batthyany, whose son, Béla, one of the pleasantest men I ever met, was, I think, at that time attached to the Austrian Embassy in London, but had travelled much, and often ran home for a few days' leave. If there was any hereditary unruliness in the Lützow family, as the ancient ballad anent "Lützow's Wilde Jagd" would have led one to expect, it showed itself in "Schnu," my friend's only daughter, a girl as quaint as her name, who, after much compulsion and persuasion, was at last induced to put on a ball-dress and allow herself to be presented at Court. She detested society, had refused to learn to dance, and when I met her at the Hofburg

on the evening of what she considered her execution, had managed to pull her wreath of forget-me-nots over one ear, and to tear her frock, and she looked so completely miserable that I could not help laughing as I asked her what was the matter. "I am not quite sure," she replied, "but either I am crazy or all these people are. Imagine getting into horrible uncomfortable clothes and tight shoes to go racing round a hot room when one could be so happy at home!" Her brother was in Diplomacy, and, following his father's example, took a British wife, who was so wedded to her insular ideas that she used to carry an English housemaid round the world with her.

Of quite another type were two or three Polish women with whom I was thrown, and who captivated my affections at once. Anything more charmingly gentle and feminine it would be difficult to find; their manners had a delicate repose and sweetness very rare even then in the great world, and far rarer now. One whom I particularly liked had, before her marriage, been called "Rosa Weiss" (Pink White), her intimate friend, a Hungarian girl of partly Turkish ancestry, of equally faultless complexion, going by the name of "Blau Weiss" (Blue White). Blue White never married, and there was the shadow of a sorrowful romance in her dark eyes; but Pink White, when I knew her, was a happy young matron with children as pretty as herself. While going everywhere, exquisitely dressed, and always smiling and urbane, she was quite devoted to her babies, and rejoiced in the early hour at which the dinner-parties broke up because, as she confided to me, she could get home before her little girl went to bed, and read to her out of *Little Folks*, a magazine which

was as much a favourite in her nursery as in mine. "Pink White" had something even better than beauty and social charms and mother love, a devoutly religious soul. I used to wonder sometimes whether there were not a halo already hovering over the graceful head, which could wear its diamond tiara as unassumingly as if it had been the "cornette" of a Sister of Charity.

Of the older women, I think Countess Clam Gallas was the most complete specimen of the Society woman as she was conceived of in my youth, a real "grande dame," with the imperturbable dignity and serenity of that fast disappearing creature covering principles and prejudices as inflexible as a wall of steel. She was still beautiful in a very etherealized way, with finely cut features, and white hair dressed as we were all dressing our hair just then—with rather affected simplicity; and she almost always wore white satin in the evening, a tint which her complexion fully justified. To be invited to one of her weekly receptions was a distinction—to be asked to come to them *always*, a compliment very rarely paid to any foreigner. On account of her great regard for the Elliots she extended this favour to me, and, after it became known, my life was made a burden to me by ambitious women who kept entreating me to obtain invitations for them, a thing I should never have dared to ask for, even had I had the slightest inclination to do so.

I suppose every Embassy gets showers of what are called in the Service "soup tickets," formal notes of introduction from the F.O. recommending travelling Britishers to the Representative's good offices. But, oh! it is sometimes hard on the Representative, and harder still on his wife! They want to go to Court, of course.

Then one has to ascertain whether they have ever really made their bow at Buckingham Palace; about this the country cousins, wives and daughters of M.P.s for the most part, are pretty honest, but on the British principle that "anything is good enough to wear abroad" they will not bring decent frocks with them, and they do no kind of credit to their introducers. They will turn up at a Royal garden-party in a serge skirt and cotton blouses! Once, on such an occasion, I struck, vowing I would not bring such apparitions before the Sovereigns. My husband made me do it in the end, but it was a long time before I forgave the criminals. I think my worst ordeal of this kind happened in Vienna, when a man in our own Service, who had been rusticating in some outlandish post for a long time, brought his wife and requested to have her presented to the Empress. The Elliots were away and the duty fell on me, who had my hands pretty full just then, as the King and Queen of Italy were visiting the Emperor and Empress. Mrs. —— was pretty and apparently knew how to dress; at one moment I feared she might belong to another class of our anxieties, for nobody had ever seen her before and she struck me somehow as a divorcée. If that unkind suspicion were correct she would have to be ruled out. However, her papers, metaphorically speaking, seemed to be in order, and we received for her a card for the ball at the Palace. No Diplomatic circle was held that night, and I found I should have to walk my lady up the entire length of the ball-room and mount with her the five or six steps to the dais, where the whole world would be staring at us when we made our curtseys. I looked round for her, caught sight of her head in a group behind me, and beckoned her to come forward. As she emerged, she stood revealed in

a short-all-round frock, displaying the last thing anybody expected to behold just then—a neat pair of ankles. I tried to shut my eyes not to see the glances of amazement which followed us up that room, and to this day I do not know how we got up and down those wide red steps. The Empress was, naturally, quite cross, and I felt her hard little frown making me cold in the back when at last I could turn and run away.

I think it was at this party that I—and others—got the first glimpse of the new French Diplomacy, and we did not like it at all. The French Embassy till then was a very well composed one. Count Du Châtel and his wife were people of the pleasant old aristocratic sort, and the three married Secretaries and their wives all of the same world. They entertained quite a great deal, and the only depressing note about their parties was the rather mournful expression of the Ambassadress as she watched us eat her excellent dinners, for she was literally starving herself to death in order that her good looks might not be diminished by excessive stoutness, a misfortune which had overtaken some members of her family. She and her husband were rather ardent Royalists, as were also most of the men of the extremely select staff. But Paris was sliding down into the slough of democracy, and a new Secretary came out with an impossible name and a wife who had never been in the great world before. Anxious, however, to persuade us that she knew all about it, she looked round for a model to imitate, and evidently fixed upon the unapproachable Countess Clam Gallas as "her style." The quiet dignity of this lady's ways, her grand manner, her low voice, her faint icy smile of disapproval when people needed snubbing, were all paraded with great success by the little French roturière, and the result

was too funny for words. Within a short while after that the French Service was flooded with her like, for Count Du Châtel and most of the men of his class retired from it when the Orleanist Princes were banished from the Army.

With all my admiration for some of the Viennese aristocrats, I must admit that most of them had not what the Scotch call "the root of the matter" in them; the real aristocrat, we are told, is considerate and polite to all, whether they happen to wear coat-armour or not, but the bearers of sixteen—and sixty—quarterings in Austria can be brutally rude to those whom they regard as inferiors. The Rothschilds were, for instance, I thought, abominably treated by them, and could never obtain proper recognition, although they were pleasant, unassuming people who gave charming entertainments and never got in anybody's way. Of course the hatred of Jews had something to do with it, but considering that there were very few families who had not been helped at one time or another by Jew money, the thing in this case seemed unjust. Baron Rothschild had a beautiful house, from which he could see all too plainly the shabby old back wall of the garden of his next neighbour, Prince S——. The thing became an eyesore to him, and he sent to the Prince to ask if he might be allowed to beautify it a little. The answer, highly applauded in the smart circle, was as insulting as a blow in the face: "Ich mache keine Juden Geschäfte!"[1]

The high and mighty Prince S—— had a little humiliation to bear on his own account shortly afterwards, and I, for one, was not a bit sorry for him. He was giving a great dinner-party, and among his guests was a man we all knew for an accomplished gourmet who would

[1] "I do no business with Jews!"

let no dainty pass him untasted. When a certain dish was handed round stuck all over with gigantic truffles, this gentleman, disregarding the servant's attempt to help him and get away with it, insisted on pulling off and depositing on his plate the black beauty which had crowned the edifice. Other persons declared afterwards that the members of the family and the servants too became visibly agitated, but no one had the courage to intervene, and the epicure settled himself in his seat, smiled on his prize, and cut open—a truffle made of painted cardboard! That was a tragic moment for everybody concerned.

Speaking of the Rothschilds reminds me of an amusing mistake made by a young lady of the Paris branch brought to Vienna to marry one of her Austrian cousins. She knew not a word of German, and her future father-in-law was equally ignorant of French. It had been impressed upon her that she must do everything in her power to propitiate him, so she set to work to learn a few polite sentences of his language. After the great dinner given to celebrate the betrothal, Mademoiselle, gathering all her courage, came towards the old gentleman, and, stretching out both hands, inquired tenderly, "Meine liebe Papa, haben Sie gut *gefressen?*" ("My dear [both in the feminine] Papa, have you grazed well?")

CHAPTER XXXIV

IMPRESSIONS OF THE IMPERIAL FAMILY

Visit of the King and Queen of Italy to Vienna—Monsignor Vannutelli and a fair heretic—A wet review and a green Field Marshal—Siamese Princes in Vienna—A benevolent Ambassadress and her protégé—Archduke Albrecht, his reply to the revolutionaries in 1848—His good luck and coolness—The battle of Custozza—His Uncle John, "the best-loved man in Austria," the friend of Hofer and the Tyrolese—Archduke Salvator and his wife—Their flight from Parma in 1859—Pillage of their property, and murder of Colonel Anviti by Farini—How to pay private bills with Government appointments—"Unanimity in the eyes of Europe"—The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland—Their home life—Little people come in to dessert—"Prinzesschen can do that too!"—Registering heirs to the British Throne.

I SUPPOSE there was a political purpose in the visit of the King and Queen of Italy to Vienna, but all that struck the ordinary observer was that they enjoyed it immensely. Royalties must be either extraordinarily good Christians or very accomplished actors! Animosities, injustices, hatreds engendered by the wars of centuries, appear to have no hold upon their sentiments at all. The man who has thrashed you before all the world, who has made you shed tears of shame yesterday, becomes your best friend and welcome guest almost before you have had time to get into clean clothes or he to wash your blood off his hands. You are still distractedly paying the war bills and trying to provide for soldiers' widows and orphans

when he graciously intimates his intention of staying with you for a fortnight, and your sorely tried purse is finally emptied to provide for his feasting and amusement. Of course this only applies metaphorically to this particular case: fifteen years had elasped since the Austrians had been chased out of Italy, and King Humbert's recollection of events had had time to mellow a good deal; also his mother, Queen Adelaide of Piedmont, had been an Austrian Archduchess; but all the same it was rather funny to see all these great people fall into each other's arms like long-parted brothers and sisters enraptured at meeting once more. And what delightfully solemn and distinguished airs the Embassy of the visiting Royalty takes on at such a time! It seems to be acting as sponsor for its own country's crowned heads, and demands in return a consideration mixed with awe from the rest of its colleagues.

We have all been through it, and all behave precisely alike in the flattering circumstances, but that does not prevent us from being hugely amused when our neighbour's turn comes. Count Robilant was the Italian Ambassador just then, and neither he nor his dear good wife quite escaped the stiffening effects of the glorification. None of the "Dips" grudged it to them really, for even the flight of time had not altogether removed the Italian unpopularity in Vienna, and there were moments when I used to watch the Ambassador curiously and feel a little sorry for him, notably when he had to meet the Pope's Legate at parties and give precedence to the stately Ecclesiastic who was treated with such marked deference. Monsignor Vannutelli was very much a man of the world, and I never saw him in the least put out except once or twice, when the chances of social war allotted to

him some Protestant lady to take in to dinner, and the fair heretic, in all good faith, slipped her arm through his and, clinging confidingly to the purple sleeve, marched off with him to the dining-room.

As I was still quite a minor personage the honour only fell to me rarely, but as I had known him before and was sufficiently Roman to remember the rules, he looked pleased when it happened, and I, naturally, was delighted, for he was a capital talker and most pleasant companion. Monsignor tactfully took a short holiday when the Italian Sovereigns descended upon us, a piece of consideration which earned him some gratitude in certain quarters. There was the usual round of festivities for them, including, of course, a review, and if I am not mistaken it was at this particular review that the rain came down in such torrents that many of the grand uniforms were completely ruined. Loud was the wailing among the officers, for of all military costumes in the world, the uniforms of the Austrian Army are the most showy, expensive, and unpractical. The enormous green plumes worn by Field Officers did no end of damage that day. The dye trickled down in sticky streams over the white and pale blue cloth and the costly gold lace, and did not even respect the nice white hair of our good Archduke Rainer. He returned from the review with a head as green as a parrakeet's; the tint paled as weeks passed to a more delicate shade of verdure, and then suddenly turned bright yellow, so that in the last stages of his trial he resembled an elderly canary.

Talking of canaries reminds me of a Siamese Prince who turned up with a numerous suite about this time. He and his people standing together and staring around them in the corner of one of those much gilt salons in the

Hofburg irresistibly recalled a group of brilliant little birds worried to death at finding themselves out of their cage. Not one of the party reached to my shoulder, but the mannikins were as pretty as they could be, with their fine small heads and bright black eyes, their close-fitting Court dress and tiny swords, on which rested a fairy claw —their trim little legs encased in pink silk stockings, and feet in diamond-buckled pumps that would have fitted a girl of ten! One wanted to hold out one's finger and chirrup to them to hop on it. Tall Count Robilant with his one empty sleeve, and the stout, benignant Countess, looked like giants in comparison!

The Countess was a very kind, warm-hearted woman, and was always doing good to somebody, though very few suspected it. Once she called upon me to collaborate with her in a benevolent intrigue which I am sorry to say did not succeed, but which afforded me an amusing little side-light on human nature. In response to a mysterious note asking me to come and see her on important business, I went over to the Embassy wondering what on earth I was wanted for. Imagine my surprise when, as calmly and naturally as though the thing wanted were a cookery recipe or the address of a tradesman, I was requested to find a rich wife for a good young man! Apparently my friend thought that, being an American, I kept some private list of aspiring heiresses anxious to buy coronets with dollars. Seeing that I did not rise to the suggestion, she gave me her protégé's life-history. He was morally and physically sound, good-looking, good-tempered, had a title that would give his wife the entrée to any society, and would make an excellent husband. Moreover he had a pious mother and three charming sisters, who

would all receive her with open arms. What was the trouble? Oh, quite a trifling one! The family's estates would have to pass into the hands of its creditors within a few months unless some heroic young woman would step into the breach and pay up the debts. These were not of the young man's contracting, but the result of extravagance in a former generation. Something must be done at once or dire poverty would fall on mother, daughters, and son, and, as Countess Robilant assured me, they were the very salt of the earth, people really worth saving. The situation began to appeal to me, and I suggested that the boy should go over to the United States with a pocketful of good introductions —I could give him those at least—and see if he could persuade some nice heiress to fall in love with him; but the proposition was firmly vetoed. Risk all that money on a steamer journey and new clothes, and perhaps fail in the end! No—no reasonable person would do that. The engagement must be arranged first, and the young people could meet to have a look at each other afterwards!

When I explained that that was not the method of procedure across the water, and that any American girl, no matter how interested her motives, would require the entire ceremony of courtship before binding herself, Countess Robilant looked profoundly shocked. What a country that must be where girls decided such matters for themselves! Never mind, she was sure I could do something; perhaps the bride could be found wandering round Europe, and some preliminary meeting be arranged. The family residence, a magnificent old place, was near P——, and here was the young man's photograph; I had better take it to show in case I had a chance to

open up negotiations. Leaving the kind Ambassadress sorely disappointed, I fear, I slipped the photograph into my muff and took my leave, promising to remember the "case" should opportunity offer. The picture showed a slim, correct-looking youth, with a gently melancholy expression, easily accounted for by his misfortunes.

I so far kept my promise as to write about him to an old friend, one of those stately elderly ladies who know everybody, but who, to eke out straitened means, do from time to time undertake to pilot millionaires' daughters round Europe—a task involving a good deal of anxiety, for their sprightly charges are not always easy to handle, and have naturally no social sense at all where foreigners are concerned; while, by some queer freemasonry, their arrival and the amount of their fortunes become at once known to all the smart bankrupts looking for rich brides. I felt no qualms in this instance, because I was sure Countess Robilant would never have interested herself in the young man had he not been exemplary in every way. Well, I am afraid she had believed all his mother said about him, for a few months later, when I had forgotten his existence, I was travelling down to Rome, and was delayed for an hour at P——. Wandering into the "Buffet" to get something to eat, I was struck by a certain familiarity in a face at one of the tables, the dark, scowling, unpleasant face of a solitary diner, who was drinking very copiously of the cheap red wine served free with the meal. It took me some time to remember where I had seen him before, and when I did I was grimly amused, for he was the original of the photograph. "Oh, là, là," but I was glad I had not godmothered

some high-spirited American girl into taking him for a husband. No wonder he wanted to get engaged before showing himself!

One more little story of a noble fortune-hunter I must write down before returning to more serious subjects. Again the hero was an Italian, exemplary but hard up. Discoursing of his misfortunes, a dignitary of the Church who was much interested in him said: "There is only one thing to do, my poor friend; you must marry a girl who has money. But she must also be a good Catholic, thoroughly well brought up, and capable of making you happy and of being happy with you. You will have to go away to find her, for I am afraid you have no chance here at home. Let me see. When I was Nuncio in Vienna a little while ago, there were several very nice, good girls who possessed large dowries. They are not all married yet—go to Vienna and have a try."

The suggestion seemed a good one to his young friend, and the Prelate very kindly wrote out a rough list of such girls as he could remember there, but when it was completed he corrected it, carefully putting little crosses against the names of those who had no dowry. "Make no mistakes, my son," he warned; "this is a very important matter for you!"

A few weeks later he received a letter in which the writer declared that he could never thank his revered and illustrious friend enough. He had met and fallen wildly in love with the sweetest of girls; she returned his affection; her parents approved; on consulting his adviser's list he had found a large cross beside her name, and so, though nothing had been said about money as yet, he knew it was all right. Oh, Heaven was too kind to

him, etc. The Prelate was terribly upset, and wired at once: "How could you forget crosses meant no money? Marriage out of the question." The reply he received was this: "Don't care; love her so well shall marry her all the same." Which he did, and in good story-book fashion, they lived happily ever afterwards, not a bit worried by being poor.

After all, the real necessities of life cost very little, and nobody is poor who has the unmarketable riches of peace and affection in the home. And the people who possess these will never be tempted to set too much store on the other kind, even if they have all the world can give in the way of wealth and station. Although there was a certain pathos about the position of some of the members of the Imperial family, who were what the "Almanach de Gotha" calls "ci-devant régnants," most of the ménages gave the impression of being very happy in the home, the cult of which is so dear to all German hearts from Kiel to Trieste. One of these ménages was that of the Archduke Karl Salvator, the son of the Grand Duchess of Tuscany who used to stop and speak to me when I was a little girl at the Bagni di Lucca. He seemed pleasantly Italian in his ways (my Grand Duchess was the daughter of Francis I., King of the Two Sicilies), and had all the Southern love of pretty things, particularly noticing the frocks one wore. I had one that he highly approved of, an ivory brocade with a lot of Brussels lace, and he followed me round one evening for quite a little while to study it out! His wife, Archduchess Alice of Parma, was also interested in me on account of my love of Italy and things Italian, and I have grateful recollections of them both.

They were taking out one or two grown-up daughters, shy, quiet girls, as most of the unmarried Archduchesses were, and, like all their cousins, very simply dressed. I remember seeing one of them make her début at a Court ball, and some one had put the poor child into common white tarlatan looped up with hard red geraniums in set bunches, an awful combination. The little Archduchesses did not enjoy the balls very much; they could not come down from the dais to talk to the other girls, and though many of these were their friends, yet a good deal of resentment was felt when, just as the music struck up, a favourite partner was touched on the shoulder by one of the gentlemen of the Household and informed that Archduchess so-and-so would do him the honour to dance that waltz with him. Of course the young lady herself had nothing to do with the choice; that was made for her, and for her sisters and cousins, by responsible persons who arranged that every young man who had a right to the distinction should dance with an Archduchess at least once during the season..

The only enthusiastic dancer from the dais was the Archduchess Marie Thérèse,[1] the wife of Archduke Karl Ludwig and the daughter of Prince Michael of Portugal. She was twenty-two years younger than her husband, and so pretty and lively that he was betrayed into a good deal of jealousy by the admiration she excited and her own evident enjoyment of it. She

[1] As a specimen of the number of names bestowed on some Royal infants, I transcribe those of this lady, as given in the "Almanach de Gotha": "Archiduchesse Marie-Thérèse de l'Immaculée Conception-Ferdinande-Eulalie-Léopoldine-Adélaïde-Isabelle-Charlotte-Michaëla-Raphaële-Gabrielle-Françoise d'Assise et de Paule-Gonzague-Inez-Sophie-Bartholomée des Anges."

was supposed to be rather delicate, and the Archduke made this the excuse for following her about at balls and obliging her partners to stop when they had taken her once round the room. These prohibitions made her furious, and on one memorable occasion she whispered to the man she was dancing with, an officer of the Guards, "Don't stop! Take me round the room again!" "Won't I?" was the reply; so, without glancing at the frowning Archduke, they passed him at lightning speed, the Archduchess laughing triumphantly as the colour mounted higher and higher in her pretty cheeks.

As they again approached the spot where the Archduke was standing he signed to them to stop; the guardsman was getting frightened, but the Archduchess was thoroughly enjoying the lark, so again they flew past him. All the room by this time appreciated the situation, and heads were craned forward to see what the end would be. When, out of breath at last, the couple came to a standstill, the irate husband strode up to them, took his wife's arm firmly under his own, and, in a voice of thunder, said to her partner, "*Sie* tanzen nicht mehr heute Abend!" ("*You* will dance no more to-night!") The young man was one of the best dancers there and had every number engaged, but he had to go and explain matters to the girls—who became as angry as the Archduke—and stand in a corner for the rest of the evening like a naughty child. The pretty Archduchess was also made to sit still on account of her health, which, whenever I saw her, appeared to be radiant—but then appearances are deceptive! She was only a few years older than her step-son, Franz Ferdinand, now the heir-apparent to the throne.

Among the most markedly Austrian personalities of the Empire was the Archduke Albrecht, the conqueror of Victor Emmanuel at Custozza in '66. His trim, soldierly figure was topped by the features of a typical German professor; it was difficult to reconcile the grey beard and kindly, spectacled eyes of him with the nonchalant victor of Custozza and the man who in the darkest hours of the revolution of '48 made, with two others, the only determined stand against the demands of the insurgents. By the time I knew him, however, he had long re-acquired the favour of the rather fickle Viennese; he it was who, after being attacked with sticks and stones by the mob outside the Hofburg, entered the audience room of the palace in response to a deputation of students. So angry was he that he quite lost his temper, and so far forgot himself as to cut short the spokesman of the students, who had attempted to argue with him as to certain political concessions, with the famous "Halt 's Maul!" (Shut your mouth!)—a very proper reproof, all things considered!

In some departments, Archduke Albrecht was one of the luckiest of men. His handling of the Italian affair of '66 was, according to those who were with him at the time, a revelation of the way in which his natural talents were seconded by the capacity of friend Fortune. It was only the day before the battle itself that he received the spy recommended to him by Prince Metternich and the Governor of Venice; this spy, whose "Memoirs" have since been published, was the notorious Griscelli, subsequently created Baron di Rimini by the King of Naples. Rimini had already obtained the Italian plan of campaign —according to his own account—and was now sent by the Archduke to reconnoitre Victor Emmanuel's advance

towards Verona. On Rimini's return in the evening, he was received by the Archduke, who was sitting at dinner, and, having told his story, was given a note for a hundred florins (ten pounds) and a bottle of wine. The Archduke then issued orders for the assembling of his Divisional leaders, dismissed the spy, and sat down to finish his dinner. Twenty-four hours later he was again sitting at dinner at the same table, having defeated the Italians and inflicted on them heavy losses—seven thousand casualties and eighteen thousand prisoners.

Like father, like son—so it was in the case of the Archduke Albrecht, whose father was the famous Archduke Charles, the conqueror of Napoleon at Aspern in 1809; his uncle, too, whom many still remembered at the time of our stay in Vienna, the best-loved man perhaps in all Austria, was Archduke John, the friend of Hofer and the especial devotee of Tyrol and Tyrolese interests. He married morganatically, as have done so many of the Hapsburgs, his wife being Anna Pluchel, who was made Countess of Meran.

Speaking of the Archduke Albrecht reminds me of an instance of his good-natured indifference to appearances. One evening, as he was returning on foot from a day's shooting at Ischl, he fell in with a peasant girl burdened with a baby and a load of faggots. The Archduke's kindly heart prompted him to volunteer his assistance in relieving her of the baby, an offer that was at once accepted; so down they went together to the village, the girl meanwhile taking her unknown companion severely to task for his want of skill in carrying the child. By the time they reached the girl's home, she had frequently expressed herself on the subject of "an old fool who did not know how to carry a baby properly." As she was

administering a final jobation, there hove into sight an aide-de-camp whose salute gave away the situation at once. The unlucky girl was overwhelmed, but the "old fool" only laughed, and assured her that she had been perfectly right in so describing him.

The rulers of the various Duchies in Italy were so closely allied to the reigning House in Austria that in settling down there to end their days they had quite a right to feel at home, and a stranger, beholding their calm faces and their good old-fashioned ways, would have found it hard to realize that some of them had lived through very terrible moments. One of these had befallen the now widowed Duchess of Modena when she and the Duke had to fly from Parma at the outbreak of the revolution in 1859, the revolution engineered from Turin, whence, as soon as it was completed, Rattazzi, then Prime Minister, sent the infamous Farini, the old medical director of prisons in Rome, to take on the state and duties of a Dictator. The Duke and Duchess had had to depart in such haste that they had not even taken their wardrobes with them. When Farini and his wife took possession of the Palace, everything was just as its masters had left it; and the new Dictator spent some days in sorting out their silver, keeping all that was marked with a simple F as suitable for immediate use, and melting down all the rest, which bore a crown, for future recasting. Then he had the joy of finding that his son-in-law could wear the Duke's clothes, which he immediately handed over to the young man, while Madame Farini and her daughters were rioting joyously in the Duchess's wardrobes and linen cupboards.

These important matters being settled, Farini's attention was called to public affairs by the capture of an ex aide-de-camp of the Duke, a certain loyal Colonel

named Anviti. He commanded that the officer should at once be handed over to the mob to be killed as they thought best. So Anviti was dragged with a rope round his neck to the public square, and half an hour later his head was displayed on a monument which stood there. Before sunset the man who had cut it off was promoted to be the Director of the Prison. Farini owed some seven thousand francs to the proprietor of the San Marco Hotel for entertaining his friends and partisans, and, instead of currency, tendered him the commission of Colonel on the Staff. In this he followed a Turin precedent, for Baron Ricasoli had already paid a carriage bill by making the livery-stable keeper his private secretary with a large Government salary.

The annexation of the Duchy to the Kingdom of Piedmont was worked in the usual way—the register of voters seized by force, and votes extorted by threats, if a small sum of money had not been sufficient to enlighten the inhabitant as to the advantages of having Victor Emmanuel take the place of his old ruler. "Unanimity in the eyes of Europe" was what the Turin Government demanded in each and all of these displays; the task of obtaining that unanimity they were obliged to put into the hands of low-born, blood-stained adventurers, of whom only one thing could be predicated with certainty—if they had full permission to steal for themselves, they would stick at nothing. The true history of what foreigners fondly call the "Making of United Italy" will afford some interesting reading if it ever comes to be written.

There were some of the "Rois en exil" in Vienna who came not from Italy, but from north of the Alps—the young King and Queen of Hanover, known after

the annexation of Hanover by Prussia as the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland. They lived at Pentzing, a charming place just outside Vienna, in the vicinity of Schönbrunn, the country air being considered better for the Duchess, who was extremely delicate. This fact did not at all interfere with her enjoyment of society, however, and the distance was short enough to allow of their driving in and out as often as they liked.

Duchess Thyra, as everybody knows, was a younger sister of our own Alexandra, and looked very like her, although she was a frail little mite of a thing and her beauty was of a somewhat less regular order. Her people took tremendous care of her, and it was quite curious to see her wrapped up for the return drive to Pentzing after she had been dancing all night. Once, when there were other Royalties at the Embassy, whom Lady Elliot could not leave, it fell to me to assist at the ceremony; and I counted four layers of wraps put on her with anxious care by her lady-in-waiting. First came one of those white shawls, finer than Shetland, which the Russian ladies make the "gens de la cour," the women in the servants' quarters, knit for them, soft as a cloud, and measuring three or four yards square when spread out; this enveloped her from head to foot, and then came a long light cloak of wadded satin, then one all gold and embroidery, which was instantly covered up by another of costly fur. Nothing was left visible except her head, which was now wrapped up in folds of lace, leaving only her bright dark eyes to be seen; and last of all out came one tiny foot after the other from under her skirt to be encased in white fur boots lined with pink satin. It was surprising that she could walk as far as the carriage!

The Duke was a most cheerful young man, who seemed to enjoy life immensely. He had one of those particularly big noses which generally belong to successful people, and confided to me that he was proud to be able to call himself the ugliest man in the Empire. They had two children to whom they were devoted, and who were brought in to dessert in good old English fashion when they gave informal dinners in the pretty house at Pentzing. We were there on one of these occasions, and it was delightful to see the Duke make room for baby's high chair to be set beside him, while that for the little sister was squeezed in close to Mamma's. Then the English nurse tucked the little people into their places, whispered anxious recommendations about "not too many sweets, *please*, your Royal Highness," and disappeared, leaving the children complete masters of the situation.

From that moment nobody paid any attention to anything else. "Baby" was barely a year old, and his lip quivered a little as he looked at all the strange faces round the brightly lighted table; but he overcame the weakness at once, and behaved with much dignity as long as we were in the dining-room. Afterwards, when we had left the men behind and there were only women in the drawing-room, he grew more confidential, pulled off his socks, and kissed his own rosy toes with gurgles of delight. The little girl was jealous of the admiration this feat excited. "Prinzesschen can do that too!" she cried scornfully, and tearing off her shoe she flung it into a corner of the room, stood on one foot, and brought the other up to her lips, nearly tumbling over in the whirl of flying lace skirts and blue ribbons which the evolution set in motion.

My husband had stayed with the Cumberlands at Gmunden, where they passed their summers, under rather quaint circumstances, and had seen the baby boy at a much earlier stage of his existence. As these children were eligible for the throne of England, it was necessary for the British Representative to testify to their birth and sex. Sir Henry Elliot had managed to be away on leave each time there was an addition to the family, so it fell out that in the preceding year Hugh, who was in charge, had received a telegram one evening requesting his immediate presence at Gmunden, some twelve hours distant from Vienna. He was rather puzzled at having had no warning that he was likely to be wanted; but he just caught the night train, and, on arriving at his destination, learnt that the happy event had taken the family by surprise before either nurse or doctor had arrived on the scene. The Duke and Duchess had gone off for a ramble in the woods, had got themselves quite lost, and had only reached home after a long and fatiguing walk, and the little Prince had frightened everybody by a too precipitate entrance into this world of woe. Otherwise all was well; the possible heir to our already generously provided throne granted the audience from his nurse's arms, and was duly registered as a member of our own reigning family; and his illustrious Papa, who doubtless felt as superfluous as men always do on these occasions, entertained Hugh for a day or two very graciously and pleasantly.

When the little Princess came into the world the duty of paying her the earliest possible visit had fallen to a bachelor of the Embassy Staff, who, instead of racing up to Gmunden after the baby's arrival, had been

obliged to wait there for it during a whole fortnight, because, in truly feminine fashion, she was not punctual in keeping her appointment. The Diplomatist had other engagements, and was fuming to get back to town, and two or three times a day he would get hold of the still idle monthly nurse and question her as to when he should be free. On the principle of always giving a pleasant answer the good woman would say, "Not a minute later than eight o'clock to-morrow morning, Mr. ——"; and when to-morrow came and nothing had happened she would tell him that there had been a little mistake, and the event had been postponed till tea-time, always doing her best to keep the impatient guest good and happy. He believed her implicitly, and our revered Queen Victoria having signified her wish to be apprised of the little stranger's arrival, her zealous servant, every time he had spoken to the nurse, sent off a telegram to Windsor conveying the latest professional dictum—telegrams which, I was told, sent the Queen into fits of laughter! It is too bad to entrust poor ignorant bachelors with these important missions!

CHAPTER XXXV

A TRAGEDY—AND A WEDDING

Murder of the Emperor of Russia—His strange dream and consequent forebodings—Loris Melikov and his methods—A new plot brought to light in March 1881—The Emperor is dissuaded from attending the parade—The draft of the Constitution and the last cigarette—The first explosion on the bridge—"It is early yet to thank God!"—Last sight of the Emperor erect—"Zasha, do you know me?"—The Emperor's spirit repeatedly returns to pray in the Cathedral of the Assumption—The Archbishop learns its mission—It is seen no more—The last pictures in my Viennese gallery—Wedding of Rudolph and Stéphanie in the Hofburg—The bride weeps many tears but smiles at last.

WE remained at Vienna for only two years, of which—although I have perhaps given already an overfull account—one of the most important events remains to be chronicled. It was such a sad and terrible one that, though it took place in the first year of our stay, I only find courage to approach it at the close of this part of my record. Not that the disaster struck at any member of my own family, but it struck at the whole human family, and, at such times, we all feel our inalienable membership in that. The news of the murder of the good, merciful Emperor, Alexander II. of Russia, brought to all the civilized world a shock of personal grief, of bereavement and horror, such as it will be difficult for after-generations to realize. All that the noblest, most generous and enlightened of monarchs

could do to improve his people's condition he had done, and was doing up to the very moment of his death. The Constitution he was about to grant was blotted out in his blood, and the anarchist hand that killed him plunged the Empire into a period of darkness and suffering and crime which barely wore itself out in the succeeding quarter of a century.

To him, who had faced death and danger so long and so calmly, the end could have caused only momentary surprise—indeed, he had long believed that, sooner or later, death would so approach him. The Russian temperament is always inclined to mysticism, and Alexander II. had had a double forewarning, of which the first part had already been fulfilled, so that for him the completion of the second could never have been quite absent from the background of his thoughts when he permitted them to dwell on his own destiny.

Some years before the Russo-Turkish War of 1876, he had a dream which seemed to him so strange that he sent an account of it to his Ambassador at Constantinople, Count Ignatieff, telling him to consult a certain celebrated soothsayer on the subject. The Emperor had dreamed of having seen two full moons in the same sky, the one white and normal, the other a blood-red. This dream troubled his imagination so profoundly, and reverted to it with such haunting persistence, that he at last became convinced it must portend something of great import to him, and so he had recourse to a soothsayer to interpret its meaning.

Ignatieff, having submitted the dream to the diviner, sent back his reading of it to the anxious Emperor, who can hardly have been much reassured by the explanation. It was to the effect that the white moon betokened a war

in the near future between Russia and Turkey, that the victory would be with the Russians; but that soon after it was over the Emperor would be attacked by some of his own subjects, who would ultimately succeed in carrying out their designs against his life.

In due time the first part of the prophecy, which had become food for Court gossip, came to pass. The war which ended in the Berlin Conference of 1878 took place, and those about the Emperor began to wonder whisperingly whether and when the conclusion of the prophecy would be fulfilled. Already signs were not wanting that a catastrophe might occur at any time. In the last few years, since the first attempt in 1866 by Karakazov upon the life of Alexander II., no less than six others had taken place. One Chief of Police had followed another, until at last the post was assigned to the Armenian, Loris Melikov, in the first days of the eighties.

He was eminently successful in his administration of it, to the extent, at least, of obtaining *general* information of the plans of the Nihilists, but he was eventually even less fortunate than his predecessors in securing sufficient of the details to enable him to arrest the criminals or to do more than adopt general precautions for the safety of the Emperor and the Imperial family.

On Saturday, March 12th, 1881, matters were in a condition of extreme tension in the precincts of the Winter Palace in Petersburg. The Emperor was much and anxiously occupied both with his own private affairs and those of the State; his approaching morganatic marriage with Princess Yuriefskaia, to whom he was passionately attached, did not distract him from the plan of a Constitution for Russia, which he had under consideration, and which was occupying his earnest attention.

Also he was sad and depressed with the condition of things about him, feeling deeply the ingratitude of the people for whom he had done so much in 1861, when, in glad compliance with the dying request of his father, Nicholas I., he had abolished serfdom and given liberty and right of ownership of land to twenty-two millions of his subjects, following up this long-desired emancipation by endowing them with educational institutions the most liberal which they were as yet fitted to enjoy.

It was in these days of March 1881 that Loris Melikov had further saddened the Emperor by reporting the discovery of a new plot among the Nihilists, of which the details were still being brought to light. On the 12th the Chief of Police had been using his best endeavours to dissuade his master from going the next morning to a parade of the Engineers of the Guard in the Mikhailovski riding school, and to that end had been laying before him the danger to which he would inevitably expose himself in so doing. Finally the Emperor had consented to absent himself from the review, and Melikov had retired in the belief that he had succeeded in gaining his object. Shortly after his withdrawal, however, there entered the Emperor's cabinet one of the Grand Duchesses, his sister-in-law, with the request that he would rescind his decision; her son, Nikoli Mikhaelovitch, whom he had just appointed his aide-de-camp, would be dreadfully disappointed at not being able to make his appearance in his new uniform beside his uncle the Emperor, at the parade in the riding school! Alexander II., with his habitual kindness, let himself be persuaded by her into promising his attendance at the parade rather than disappoint the young man, and the decision was a sadly momentous one, as events were to prove.

On the morning of the next day, Sunday, the Emperor was busily reading through once more the plan of the proposed Constitution, a cigarette in his hand, when the carriage was announced. It was time to go to the riding school. Putting down his cigarette on the ash-tray, he folded up the draft of the Constitution and placed it in the drawer of his writing-table, saying as he did so that he would finish going through it when he got home again in the afternoon.

He arrived a few minutes late at the riding school, where the officers, already assembled, had been talking among themselves, as chance would have it, of the Emperor's dream of the two moons. After the parade he drove off with his newly appointed aide-de-camp to lunch at the palace of the latter's father, the Grand Duke Mikhael Nikolaievitch; thence, at twenty minutes past one, he set out once more for the Winter Palace, leaving his nephew behind him to follow later—guided who shall say by what instinct?

The days, at that season of the year and in the latitude of Petersburg, draw early to a close; by the time that the Emperor's carriage had reached the bridge spanning the Katherine canal, he could see, through the thickening afternoon, the red glimmer of the Sanctuary lamp in that corner room of the Mikhailovski Palace in which his grandfather had been murdered in 1801, and which, since then, had been turned into a chapel.

At this point a sudden explosion brought his carriage to a standstill, and throwing open the door, he sprang out. Loris Melikov, he saw, had not been mistaken in his warnings—several people were lying about the roadway, dead and dying, amid a haze of chemical smoke, and, on the pavement, a group of police officials were

struggling with a wild-looking young man. Stepping across the wreckage towards them, the Emperor approached and asked, "Is this the gentleman?"

On learning that that was indeed the man who had committed the crime, he inquired, "And what is your business in Petersburg?"

Presently, turning away, he was walking back towards his carriage when an officer, Captain Koulebjakine, ran up to him and asked if he were injured.

"No, I am not, thank God indeed!" he answered. "But look at these poor people," indicating the unfortunate creatures prostrate in the snow about him. As he spoke these words an individual, who had been leaning all this time against the parapet of the bridge, came forward, saying as he did so, "It is early yet to thank God!" with which he threw a small bomb at the Emperor. It missed its mark and exploded without injuring him; he could be seen, erect for an instant, through the smoke of it, with his hand on his sword-hilt, as though in the act of drawing to defend himself, when a second bomb was thrown and burst at his feet, between him and the thrower. When the smoke lifted again, it showed the Emperor lying on the ground in a pool of blood; one of his legs had been blown off at the knee, the other somewhat lower. The first person to reach him was the aforementioned Captain Koulebjakine, who was joined almost immediately by the Grand Duke Mikhail Nikolaievitch, who at the noise of the first of the three explosions had rushed out on foot and bareheaded from his palace in the direction taken a short while previously by the Emperor's carriage. In order to avoid attracting any undesirable attention, the Sovereign had gone his way without escort of any kind. Together, the Grand Duke

and Koulebjakine bent over him. "Zasha, do you know me?" the former asked, overwhelmed with shock and grief. (Zasha is the Russian familiar diminutive of Alexander.)

The Emperor was not dead yet, but his only answer to his brother's entreaty was to open his eyes and to whisper, so low as to be scarcely heard by his listeners, the words, "Cold . . . very cold. Home . . . die at home." The two men, with the help of the by-standers, laid the Sovereign flat on Koulebjakine's sledge, in preference to the Imperial carriage, and the Captain crouched at the lower end of it with the mangled limbs of Alexander on his knees, while, with his hands, he did what he could to aid the improvised tourniquets of handkerchiefs in preventing the flow of blood. The Emperor's cap, lost in the explosion, he replaced with his own; and so, as quickly as possible, the sledge was driven over the snow, a sad trail of crimson in its wake, towards the Winter Palace. Immediately after the Emperor had been taken away, the spot where he had fallen was surrounded by police and gendarmes to preserve it from public contact, and roped in; later, a chapel was erected there, the altar rising exactly over the area of the first bloodstained snow. On arrival at the palace the Emperor was carried up to his study; his own camp bedstead of iron was brought in from the next room, and he was placed upon it, while his surgeon, Botkine, fought hard to save his life, but without success. By placing indiarubber bands on the stumps of both legs and round the right wrist, the Emperor's vitality was kept up so that once more he opened his eyes; but he never spoke again, and at twenty minutes to four he died, surrounded by the members of the Imperial family. Princess Yuriefskaia was lamenting her loss in a corner of the room.

As it was then, it is to-day: the narrow bed with its blood-stained linen, the chair pushed back from the table, the pen laid down by the long-dried inkstand, the half-smoked cigarette where he had dropped it in the ash-tray before going to the riding school. Only one thing is gone, the draft of the Constitution from the writing-table drawer. When Alexander II. breathed his last, his son and successor strode to the table, drew out the document, and tore it across and across in a fury of grief and resentment.

Some years later a strange rumour began to pass from mouth to mouth in Moscow, the mother of Russian cities. It was at first told as an idle tale, and with an apology for its wildness—"The sort of thing the common people *will* believe, even in an age of universal progress and enlightenment; an instance . . . I give it to you for what it is worth!" and so on. Gradually, however, the gossip became bolder, until at length it came to be received no longer with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders in drawing-rooms, but with reproving frowns and hands uplifted in deprecation, by scandalized clergy and officials. Rumour, that vague and illusive Hydra, had assumed proportions that could no longer be treated with disdain. It had fastened upon all that was most sacred to the Russian people—their faith, their dead, and one who had been the father of their nation. It had dared to assert that the Emperor Alexander II., who had been so impiously murdered in Petersburg, was returning nightly in the spirit to this world, and that he had been seen praying before the "Ikonostase," the great screen that, as in every Russian church, divides the Sanctuary from the nave, in the Cathedral of the Assumption. At last the Archbishop decided that the matter called for investi-

gation, in view of the insistence of the rumours, and accordingly took it upon himself to look into it.

On a night in April 1884, therefore, he let himself into the Cathedral between eleven and twelve o'clock, at which latter hour the spirit was said to appear. He had donned his full sacred vestments, and provided himself with the bread and salt which constitutes the customary ceremonial offering to the Sovereign in Russia. He composed himself as best he could to await in prayer the coming of the dead Emperor. It must have been a severe ordeal for the old man, that lonely vigil at such an hour and in such a place. It did not last long, however. At a few minutes before midnight the Archbishop's courage and his faith in Providence were put to the severest strain of his life ; the side door in the southern wall of the building was opened, and there came forward into the circle of light, thrown by the silver chandelier suspended before the Ikonostase, the figure of a man in the uniform of a general officer with the aiguillettes of a personal aide-de-camp to the Emperor—an insignia which Alexander cherished more than any other, as reminiscent to him of the post which he had held under his father, Nicholas I., and which, as Emperor himself, he had always affectionately retained as an inseparable detail of his daily costume. As the figure drew nearer now, and the once familiar features became plainly illumined in the rays of the chandelier, no further room for doubt was left to the appalled Prelate ; it was indeed none other than the same Alexander II. over whose remains, when three years earlier they had been laid to rest in the fortress church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Petersburg, he himself, the Archbishop, had said the funeral prayer and swung the censer. And now he was staring at it

with his own eyes, and knew at last that the dead are sometimes permitted to return.

As the spectre advanced, the Prelate's courage and long training stood him in good stead. Rising from his knees before the Ikonostase, he took the gold plate on which were the bread and salt and proffered it to the thing that confronted him, with the usual words of greeting. To these no answer was vouchsafed, the bread and salt were waved gently aside by the apparition, which, according to the Archbishop, looked troubled and preoccupied, as it passed by him and through an open door of the Ikonostase to the altar rails, where it knelt for some time in prayer. Presently the figure rose once more and began to return towards him ; he summoned up sufficient hardihood to ask the spirit what was troubling it and to conjure it in the name of the Trinity to speak. It had been said (and this may have contributed to inspire his action) that, at the time of the Emperor's death, those about his bedside had had a strong conviction that there was something on his mind of which he had wished, but had been unable, to speak. At all events what followed on the Primate's conjuration would seem to confirm this report. Although he never, of course, confided the communication made to him to any but those for whom it was intended, yet he let it be known that a conversation of some length took place between himself and the spirit of the Emperor, and that the latter would return no more, since the Primate had solemnly undertaken to comply with certain requests that had been made of him. Since that night the troubled spirit has never shown itself again, having apparently found the peace till then denied it.

The last picture in my Viennese gallery must be

a happy one. In May 1881 the royal apartments at Schönbrunn were thrown open to receive some Royal guests whom the nation welcomed with great enthusiasm, the King and Queen of the Belgians, who were bringing their daughter to marry Archduke Rudolph, the heir to the throne. It still wanted a few days of Princess Stéphanie's seventeenth birthday, and in many ways she seemed almost a child still, far too young for the cares and responsibilities of marriage. Her straight little figure looked too thin for the new long frocks, her fair hair had not yet learned to curl obediently down over her forehead, and her quick, impulsive movements suggested that a skip and a run would be more natural to her than to glide about in the stately fashion which became her new dignity. Some of the Austrian great dames, misled by this apparent immaturity, ventured to treat Princess Stéphanie rather patronizingly—superciliously, if the truth be told—but regretted their imprudence, for the little lady at once and very definitely put them in their places, and that with a haughty composure which said much for her latent strength of character. After the first shock they liked her all the better for it, and I think her gentle, charming mother, who had probably warned her what to expect, was much amused at her daughter's success. But the parting was a great trial for both of them, and there must, even then, have been some anxiety for the future in the Queen's heart, since Archduke Rudolph, though pleasant and genial in all his ways and evidently desirous of fulfilling all the hopes that were centred on him, had shown himself rather scatterbrained in the past, and inherited the streak of revolt against conventionality which was such a marked characteristic of his mother's family.

It had not passed to his sisters. Archduchess Gisela, two years older than he and married to Prince Leopold of Bavaria, was an extremely womanly woman of the true German type. She only came to Vienna once while we were there, and the Emperor was radiant during her visit, for it was said that she was his favourite child and more of a companion to him than the boy, or little Valerie—whom the Viennese called "die extra Mädel"[1] because she had been born twelve years after her brother—could possibly be. Princess Stéphanie, however, at once made herself dear to her father-in-law's rather lonely heart, and he always treated her with a love and a tenderness which contrasted very strongly with her own father's conduct to his daughters in after-years.

But although clouds might be hovering in the future, they cast no shadow over the brightness of the May morning when we all gathered in the chapel of the Burg to attend the wedding. Of course one had to rise at an unearthly hour in order to present oneself there in full Court costume at nine o'clock, for the city was en fête and crowded with people, sightseers, bands, Gesang-Vereins and Schutz-Vereins, all parading through the gaily decorated streets, and carriages had to go at a snail's pace.

By the time I had settled into my place with the other women of the Diplomatic Corps I must confess I was not in the best of tempers. The early morning has never been the happiest moment of the day for me, and hours of fussing under the hands of one's maid and the hairdresser is a severe ordeal at any time—intolerable when it occurs at the screech of dawn! But the first

[1] The "extra Mädel" in an Austrian household fulfils the duties of the "tweeny girl" in a small English one, helping the housemaid in the morning and the cook in the evening.

glance I cast upon the scene below me—we were seated in a balcony looking down into the church—banished every personal sensation by its extraordinary picturesqueness and beauty. The depths of the dark old building had suddenly flowered into a shimmering garden of colour—like some vast bed of tulips blooming between high grey walls, wet with dew and touched to glory by the first rays of the sun. For the sun was striking now through the high Gothic windows, and showed the entire space, barring one narrow central aisle, filled by men and women in costumes never seen in any but this splendour-loving country,—men in uniforms glittering with all the great Orders in the world, and so loaded with jewels and gold that they seemed to reproduce some dream from the Arabian Nights; women in the national Court dress, which enforces just so much gold and silver embroidery whatever other ornaments the wearer's taste may choose to add, but softens that too barbaric richness by the long Hungarian apron of fine white lace and the veil whose sweeping folds are somehow still the ideal ornament for every woman's head, recalling a thousand lovely attributes of nobility and modesty too often overlooked to-day. Every woman there was wearing, too, the rightful crown of her rank, and the hundreds of diamond coronets caught the light in dazzling purity, and broke it again in prismatic showers over graceful heads and white necks, where more diamonds ran in little rivers of brightness, clouded over intermittently by the waving of the big white feather fans which we were all using just then, and which the warm, heavy weather kept constantly moving like soft milky wavelets on a midsummer sea.

I had not tired of gazing down at this wonderful scene when the triumphal music rolled up to the dark

arches overhead and the wedding procession filed in. For me the interest centred on one figure there, that of the young, young bride leaning on her father's arm as he led her to her crimson priedieu before the altar. She was dressed entirely in cloth of silver, embroidered with myrtle blossoms and roses; her train made a silver river up the narrow aisle that parted the gorgeous crowd, and her little head was bowed under that new weight of the diamond crown and the flowing veil. Her father, handsome as ever in his imposing height, looked exaltedly proud; but the poor child was weeping already, and there were marks of tears on her mother's face too. The impending parting was breaking their hearts. When all the illustrious relations had taken their places on either side of the flower-decked chancel, Rudolph and Stéphanie were seen to be kneeling before it—the boy and girl who barely knew each other, but who from that moment vowed to be one, for all their lives. How rash it all seemed! How desperately necessary those prayers that the Church put up for their welfare and sanctification as the Archbishop joined their hands and dictated the great vows! The bride scarcely heard him, I think, for she, poor child, was crying so bitterly that her wisp of a handkerchief had become a little wet ball, quite insufficient to stay the flood of her tears. One's heart misgave one as one watched.

An hour later we were all in the well-known mirror room, and Rudolph, his bride on his arm, was going round the circle, and we were offering all our congratulations and good wishes to them both. Princess Stéphanie had dried her eyes, and was smiling now, as she thanked everybody and told them how happy she meant to be in her husband's country; and the young

Archduke looked as proud and pleased as if he had won his pretty bride after years of courtship and hard work—almost as happy, indeed, as some good peasant youth who brings the little wife to the home he himself has built for her, where they two will live to a good old age, and see their children's children grow up and prosper around them!

That was not what fate and heredity had in store for Rudolph and Stéphanie, but I cannot find it in my heart to tell of sad things now. I prefer to remember them as I last saw them in the old mirror room, smiling and hopeful, and trusting in the future.

My wanderings did not end with Vienna. A few years ago an old gypsy woman stopped me in a London street, and, gazing earnestly into my face, said, "You have eaten your bread in many lands!" In many lands, indeed; but the record of my journeyings must stop here, for the present at least. A little incident of my girlhood comes back to me as a warning not to trespass further on the patience of my friends. I had fallen in love with some compositions of Heller's called "Les Promenades d'un Solitaire," and I practised them day after day with deafening persistence. At last the family could stand it no longer. Nothing was said, but one morning when I came to the piano I found the folio propped up against the lectern. On its cover was a spirited sketch by my sister Annie, showing a pair of forlornly worn-out old boots, and written underneath this verdict:

"*Assez marché!*"

APPENDIX

THE CASE OF THE DUC D'ENGHIEN

THE account given by Count Réal of his own part in this mysterious business is as little explanatory of the true causes of the death of the Duc d'Enghien as are those of the other principal agents concerned in it—upon every one of whom the responsibility has been thrown in turn by each and all of his indignant colleagues. The guilt lies apparently upon one or more of the following: the First Consul, Talleyrand, Savary, General Hullin (the president of the military commission which tried and condemned the Duke), and Murat, the Governor of Paris, through whose hands the whole business was made to go by the First Consul, and who *must* have been in some wise cognizant of the latter's intentions regarding the illustrious victim. We will take the accounts of Réal, Savary, and Hullin in their order.

Réal was the presiding magistrate of the Court of Assize at Paris in the early spring of 1804, his functions seeming to have varied between those of a modern High Court Judge and those of an ordinary "Commissaire de Police." On the night of March 19–20, 1804, he retired to rest in his private rooms, contiguous to that in which the common "night-charges" were investigated by his orderly or deputy, a subaltern police official. Twice, before two in the morning, Réal was called out of bed by his orderly to attend to cases that proved to be of no importance—in view of the plot-scare prevalent at the time in Paris, the presiding magistrate was expected to be on hand at any time of the day or night—and, finally, to his subsequent profound regret, he lost his temper, rated his orderly, and gave him instructions that he was not to be disturbed again before morning.

It was not until he had risen and dressed that he happened to stroll into his study, where on the mantelpiece he saw, awaiting his notice, a letter addressed to him; opening it, he found that it was an order from the First Consul to go *at once* to Vincennes, there to examine, in his quality of magistrate, a prisoner who had been brought there a few hours before, Louis Antoine Henri de Bourbon-Condé, Duc d'Enghien, and to report without delay upon the matter to the First Consul.

Summoning his orderly, he demanded agitatedly:

"When did this come for me?"

"About three o'clock," answered that functionary. "The citoyen-magistrat gave orders that he was not to be disturbed again, and so I put it on the mantelpiece."

It was of no avail for Réal to storm at his subordinate; it only remained for him to make what haste he could to repair matters by setting off immediately for Vincennes. Having donned his official robes, he sent for a cab and had himself driven swiftly across the town to the eastward and Vincennes. This was towards eight o'clock in the morning.

At the "Barrière," or gate of the city, leading on to the Vincennes road, there passed him an acquaintance coming from the opposite direction, General Savary, looking very grave and preoccupied. On seeing Réal, Savary greeted him mechanically, and then, noticing that he was wearing his robes of office, asked with an uneasiness unaccountable to the other, where he might be going in those clothes at that hour of the day.

"I am going to Vincennes," replied Réal. "I have received instructions to proceed there in order to examine a prisoner, the Duc d'Enghien."

"The Duc d'Enghien!" exclaimed Savary. "Do you not know that—— But there must be some horrible mistake."

"What do you mean, a mistake? Why do you look like that, Savary?"

"The Duc d'Enghien is no longer alive," said Savary. "He was tried in the night and was shot early this morning. What does it all mean? When did you get your orders?"

Réal told him the whole story of the previous night, his own fatal order to the police sergeant, the belated receipt of the letter that same morning.

When he had told his tale, Savary suggested that they had better both go at once and report to the First Consul, a course which Réal, with terrible misgivings as to the reception in store for him at the hands of Bonaparte, agreed was the only one open to them; and together they repaired to the Château of La Malmaison, on the western side of Paris, where the First Consul had his residence.

The scene that ensued was appalling; the great man's fury knew no bounds of threat or language. It ended, however, in no worse for Réal than the loss of his post, and the fact that Bonaparte was able to point to his laziness as the cause of the tragedy.

Some weeks after, during the trial of Generals Pichegru and Moreau, which had been dragging on for months, a curious thing came to light. Two of the witnesses produced by Fouché, the new Minister of Police, in order to prove the fact of an extensive conspiracy against the First Consul's life, had sworn, at their first examination, *early in March*, to having seen, at the house of the brothers Polignac, a man unknown to them, but in whose presence the rest of the company remained standing, who was addressed with extremest deference, and generally accorded the respect paid only to a prince of the blood.

He had put in a regular appearance at the royalist meetings, once every fortnight, and they, the two witnesses, were convinced he must have been a member of the royal family.

This statement Talleyrand laid before Bonaparte, insisting that it pointed to the fact of there being one of the French royal family engaged as the head of an active intrigue against the Republic and the First Consul. The whole series of trials was the outcome of the arrest of Georges Cadoudal, a Breton, and a hundred and thirty others, in February of that year, for their complicity in a plot against the First Consul's life.

The question now arose, to which of the exiled royalties could the description given by the informers—two companions of Cadoudal—possibly attach? Was the stranger Louis XVIII. himself, or his brother, the Comte d'Artois? Of these one was old and fat, the other old and thin, and both were known to be at Mittau in Courland. Obviously, argued Talleyrand, it must be some one living nearer Paris than that; also the unknown was

described as young or youngish and good-looking. After long cudgelling their brains as to his identity, they had an inspiration. Louis Antoine Henri de Bourbon-Condé, the Duc d'Enghien, was known to be living just across the German frontier at Ettenheim in Baden, on an allowance made to him by the English Government !

As we have seen, he was at once kidnapped, and met his death at Vincennes on the 20th of March.

A few days after the Duke's death, the two companions of Georges Cadoudal were confronted, amongst others, with General Pichegru, and asked if they had ever seen him by any chance at any of the royalist meetings in the house of the Polignacs.

"Why yes, indeed," they instantly made answer. "Certainly we recognize him. He is that same unknown, to whose presence we gave testimony, you remember, the man who, we had reason to believe, was one of the royal family, at least, from the respect that was accorded him."

When the news of Pichegru's identification was brought to the First Consul, he said nothing at first: he seemed plunged in sombre thought that found expression at length in a single sentence.

"Oh, wretched Talleyrand!" he exclaimed, "what have you made me do ?"

The story of General Savary, relative to the dark doings of that night of March 20, 1804, is still stranger than that of Réal, and is peculiarly interesting.

Prior to that date he had been sent on a tour of inspection through La Vendée and the west, to report upon political conditions in those parts. He had carried out his mission as expeditiously as possible, a fact which he laments, as his own prompt return to Malmaison and the First Consul were the means of involving him in the most terrible affair of his life. "Would that I had delayed it, if only for a few hours!" were his sentiments in after-years.

He reached Malmaison on the afternoon of the 19th of March; the First Consul had been accessible to none since the morning, and Savary was obliged to await his pleasure in the ante-rooms and corridors, where an atmosphere of profoundest gloom, and

even of a nameless uneasiness, seemed to him to have fallen upon the few acquaintances he met with. There was much whispering in corners and a general air of secrecy; the place was full of rumours that the Duc d'Enghien had been brought to Paris, but no one knew anything for certain. The whole atmosphere was electric, with a vague disquiet.

Not until after five o'clock was Savary summoned to the cabinet of the First Consul, who received his report in silence, and then informed him that he must go at once to Paris with a letter for the military governor of the capital, Murat, to whom he was to give the missive personally.

Mounting his horse, Savary set out and got to Paris towards seven; on reaching the governor's dwelling, he was about to dismount and hand over his horse to his orderly when the door was opened, and there issued from it the figure of a man with a club-foot, who hobbled off swiftly through the growing twilight to where a carriage was waiting for him at the end of the street. Savary recognized the figure as that of Talleyrand, but thought no more of it at the time, his attention being taken up with other things.

He found Murat sitting in his bedroom; the governor of Paris had been unwell for some days, and, to Savary, he looked both ill and careworn. Taking the First Consul's letter, he broke the seal and read it, with an appearance of acute anxiety.

"I have a job for you, General," he said, at length. "You will go to the barracks of your regiment, the horse-grenadiers, and take from it a quarter squadron, which you will lead to the castle of Vincennes. Your further orders will be made known to you on your arrival there. You had better have some dinner if you have not dined yet. You need not be at Vincennes until eleven o'clock, so you have plenty of time. But don't be later than that, whatever you do."

It was not for Savary to ask explanations of his superior, and he could only bow to the decree which condemned him to further fatigues after his journey.

He reached the fortress of Vincennes punctually at eleven o'clock, where he found, assembled in the hall of the castle, a group of officers, the colonels of each of the half-dozen or so of the infantry regiments stationed in Paris, headed by the senior

among them, Hullin. No one knew for what purpose they had been thus surreptitiously summoned, the majority having come there under the impression that they themselves were under arrest for some unknown misdemeanour. "We have asked Harel"—the commandant of the fortress—they said, "what it is all about, and he seems in a very bad humour. Says it is no business of his, that he does not count for anything, and that we must look for our instructions to some one else now."

At last they were told, by Hullin, I think, that in truth he had been instructed to proceed thither for the purpose of convening a court-martial upon the person of a prisoner brought there a few hours earlier, the Duc d'Enghien; that they were to decide upon the evidence of the Duke himself as to his guilt or otherwise, and to pass sentence in accordance with the laws governing the ordinary procedure of courts-martial.

Thus informed, they seated themselves about a table in the great central hall, and arranged the method of their procedure. Hullin was to preside, and to a captain, either of engineers or infantry, were assigned the duties of clerk to the court.

At midnight the prisoner was brought down by Harel—"a young man of five feet seven inches, pale complexion, pointed chin, chestnut-coloured hair, and grey eyes. Expression melancholy. Wears plain earrings of gold." He was dressed in dove-coloured clothes and wore a peaked travelling-cap, which he removed on entering the presence of the court-martial.

He admitted that he was the Duc d'Enghien, that his age was thirty-two, that he had fought against the Republic in 1794; when asked if he had not been guilty of conspiring with the English to murder the First Consul, he denied it indignantly, as also the acquaintance of Pichegru. "I have never seen him," he said. "As to the English Government, I wrote to it asking for employment, and received an answer to the effect that at present none could be given to me, but that if I would wait quietly, something might, perhaps, be found for me. My intention has never been to conspire, but to win back my rights by the sword." Also he admitted that he had been living at Ettenheim on an allowance made him by the English Government. At this, Hullin, who saw how fatal to the young man were these admissions, and prompted by genuine pity for his youth, attempted

to induce him to modify the uncompromising hostility of his attitude towards the Republic, but only to receive an even prouder reply.

"I know well my situation," said the Duke, "but I decline to buy mercy with a lie. That is the truth, and I am ready to abide by it. My intention has been from the beginning, I repeat, to win back my rights, and those of my family, should opportunity offer, not as a conspirator, but as a Condé, with my sword."

After this there was no more to be said: the evidence, as taken down by the clerk of the court, was signed by the Duke, and he was conducted back to the room where he had had supper upstairs, whilst the court-martial deliberated upon its finding.

The verdict was a foregone conclusion: the prisoner, by his own admission, had borne arms against the Republic, and, when taken, had been engaged in preparing to do so again in the army of a power then at war with France. That his capture had been a rude violation of international law made no difference. The Duke was summoned once more to the hall to hear the sentence pronounced upon him—that of death.

When it had been read to him, he begged that he might be allowed to write a letter to the First Consul, asking for a personal interview, adding that he felt sure he could persuade the latter of his innocence as far as any complicity in the plots of Cadoudal and Pichegru was concerned.

To this request Hullin assented willingly, promising also to forward the letter at once to Malmaison with another of his own to support it. Having finished his letter, the Duke was removed once more; and here we must have recourse to Hullin's statement of his share in those events, written long after, in 1826.

In that year Hullin, almost stone-blind as a result of the pistol-wound inflicted on him by Malet at the time of the latter's attempted "coup d'état" in October 1812, wrote, after saying that his own life's happiness had been destroyed by the odium he had had to endure for his official part in the Duke's death:

"I now took up my pen with the intention of indulging myself in the one happy privilege of the president of a court-martial, that of recommending the prisoner to mercy. At this moment, a certain general, who had been standing behind my chair since the beginning of the proceedings, and had remained

silent hitherto, stepped forward and asked me what I was doing. 'I am writing to the First Consul, to endorse the prisoner's plea for an interview and to recommend him to mercy,' I replied. At this the general, taking the pen out of my hand, said angrily, 'You have done your business; the rest is my affair.'"

Hullin's protests had no other result than that the "certain general" ordered the hall to be cleared, and informed the astonished members of the court-martial that they might return to Paris.

"Presently," continues Hullin, "while we were discussing the whole affair among ourselves in the outer hall, in the interval of waiting for our carriages—the portico being so narrow that it was only possible for them to come round one at a time—there fell upon our horrified ears the fatal sound of a volley of musketry."

Now the law required that all sentences of death in courts-martial of the Paris district should receive the sanction of the military governor of the capital before they could be carried into effect. And the military law required, at the same time, that they should be carried into effect within twenty-four hours—so that Hullin and the other members of the court-martial were under the impression that the sentence of death they had just pronounced upon the Duke would be immediately submitted for ratification to Murat.

That Hullin was not guilty of unduly promoting the Duke's death seems obvious; but the question now arises as to the identity of the unnamed "certain general." Seeing that there were only two general officers at Vincennes that night, and that Hullin himself was one of them, it is not easy to exonerate the other, Savary. Nor did the Parisians make any attempt to do so; it was even rumoured among them that Savary had been guilty of appropriating the Duke's watch, and that he had shown it laughingly to certain ladies of his acquaintance at the "salon" of one of them. His enemies, of whom he had many, declared that he had fastened a lantern on the Duke's chest to enable the firing party to see their mark, and that, on the Duke asking for a priest, he had exclaimed, "What! Does he want to die like a Capuchin?"

These charges, at any rate, were utterly unfounded.

"I was never near the Duke at all," were Savary's own words;

"nor did I set foot in the hall of the castle while the trial was in progress, but remained outside with my soldiers, who were drawn up on the embankment overlooking the moat. Moreover, I did not even set eyes on the Duke. The story of the lantern is absurd—that of the watch needs no refuting. What happened was this: the lieutenant who had come with me in charge of the horse-grenadiers came to me as I was pacing the edge of the moat at a short distance from the soldiers, and said: 'General, I have been asked to furnish a firing party. What am I to do?'

"'Give them one,' I replied.

"'And where shall I place it?'

"'Anywhere where it will not hit any passers-by,' I said—it was already drawing on towards daybreak and market people might be on the road to Paris. A thin rain had been falling all night, and there was a slight mist rising from the ground.

"After some time the lieutenant came back to announce that he had found a safe place in the moat; a spot which seemed especially adapted for the purpose, as it was near by a large hole, freshly dug in the ground, that would serve for a grave. As to the lantern, none was necessary, there being ample light to see by. The lieutenant reported to me after the execution—during which I stayed on the rampart overlooking the moat—that the Duke had asked for a priest, but had been informed that none could be procured, and that then he had requested a pair of scissors with which to cut off a lock of his own hair; this, together with a portrait that he had on him of her, he begged might be sent to the Princesse de Rohan."

(This lady the Duke had married secretly, as his family were opposed to their union, and his frequent visits to Paris, which exposed him to constant danger, were made with one object only—that of seeing her.)

That is the conclusion of Savary's tale. That nothing had been taken from the Duke's body was proved on its exhumation on March 20, 1816, when it was found after some difficulty, all traces of the grave having been obliterated; with it were brought to light several rouleaux of gold money in circular cases of red morocco leather, one of the Duke's earrings, and a silver seal, much corroded, bearing the arms of Condé; his cap, perforated by a bullet, was beside the body (which was lying on

its face), while another bullet had passed through the internal iliac fossa on the right side. He must have died instantly.

Is Savary's story to be believed? And, also, how much of the truth, if any, did he omit from it?

After the second Restoration, in 1815, a man called upon the Keeper of the Archives in Paris with a letter from the all-powerful minister of Louis XVIII., Talleyrand, in which the Keeper was requested to allow the bearer, Talleyrand's secretary, to go through the archives. This was done, and later it was discovered that all papers dealing with the case of the Duc d'Enghien had been removed, and that of those concerning the trial of Queen Marie Antoinette only the page recording the sentence of her judges had been left behind by the faithful secretary. Needless to add, the papers were never seen again. Which makes one all the more curious to know what had passed between Talleyrand and Murat on that evening of March 20, prior to Savary's arrival from Malmaison!

THE "WEISSE FRAU"

THIS celebrated spectre is known as the White Lady in Austria and in Germany generally, but in Bavaria, more usually as the Black Lady. For many centuries past she has made it her care to watch the fortunes of the Hapsburgs and the Hohenzollerns, as well as those of almost all the royal and princely families connected with either of these two great houses, so that the terror she inspires is sometimes almost tempered by the distinction her visits confer. She has been known to appear in some rare cases, in a beneficent mood, to attend a christening, but her mission is almost always to foretell death or disaster.

Her identity is still disputed; some hold her to have been a certain Countess Agnes von Orlamünde, who, in the fifteenth century, so passionately loved Albert the Handsome, Markgraf of Brandenburg, that, on his becoming a widower, she murdered her two children in order to marry him. She was prompted to this atrocious crime by his declaration that two lives stood between him and her, making it impossible for him to yield to her entreaties that, being now free to do so, he would make her his wife.

Without warning him of her intention, Countess Agnes promptly poisoned her children, and told Albert that there no longer existed any impediment to her union with him. He was so horrified at what she had done that he caused her to be walled up alive in the old palace in Berlin. Four hundred years later, in the time of Frederick the Great, in the course of some investigations in the palace, the spot where she had met her living death was discovered. She had been immured in a shaft behind a large porcelain stove in an apartment on the second floor. From behind this stove Countess Agnes has often made her appearance, heralded by the sound of harp music. Also, if any one played a harp in the room she would come forth, as if in recognition of a civility.

Her connection with the Markgraf of Brandenburg and her violent death in the Berlin palace have led many persons to believe that it is the spirit of this wretched Agnes von Orlamünde which, even now, haunts the descendants, direct and lateral, of the man who pronounced her doom; but others hold the apparition to be that of a lady of the family of Neuhaus in Bohemia, a certain Countess Bertha, or Perchta, von Rosenberg.

This lady has long been known and revered all over Germany as the legendary friend and shadowy protector of little children. She was Châtelaine of the Castle of Neuhaus, and has quite recently, in our own days, been seen looking down from an upper window on the town below. The castle is a mere ruin now, but Perchta, dressed in white and with her insignia of office, the great bunch of keys hanging from her girdle, still glides about its crumbling remains as if attending to all her old duties.

Poor Perchta was very unhappily married, and was finally obliged to invoke the protection of her brother to save her from her husband's cruelty. This she most bitterly resented, and even when he died, a few years after their union, she could not find it in her heart to forgive him for all she had had to endure at his hands. Years passed by, but her hatred fed on the memories of her sufferings and never weakened in its fierce intensity. She carried it with her to her grave, and it is supposed to be this sin of unforgiveness which she has been condemned to expiate by wandering for long centuries on earth.

But as an apparition she is, on the whole, more beneficent than her colleague of the northern Courts of Germany, and so much more genial and intelligent that one wonders why she is confounded with the other in the public mind. Her love for little children is her best-known characteristic; she has been seen to sit by their cradles, singing them to sleep—even stilling their hunger from her shadowy breast. If on meeting her, as friends of mine have done in their remote old castles, one greets her kindly, she always answers the salutation and passes harmless on her way. When she brings warning of death she does so gently, as happened to a young Margravine of Brandenburg, who, standing alone before her mirror completing her toilet for a ball, heard the door of her room open, and thinking it was the maid, called out without looking round, "What time is it?"

There was no answer for a minute or two; then a low clear voice replied, "Ten o'clock, my dear!" and the mirror showed a veiled face behind the girl's own terrified one. Icy with fear she turned, and the white-robed figure moved away and disappeared behind the screen which masked the door. By ten o'clock the next evening the girl was dead.

No one will ever know whether it was Perchta or Agnes who appeared to the Queen of Bavaria's lady-in-waiting that night of the cholera time, but various undoubted apparitions of Countess Agnes have been recorded in and about the residences of the Kings of Prussia, prior to some death in the royal family. These visitations are so incontrovertible that it has been judged wise to give standing orders that any manifestation of her presence is to be at once reported by the sentry to the officer commanding in the palace, and that he in his turn is to immediately double the guards in view of any political disturbance which might ensue on the calamity portended by her appearance.

But Perchta it would seem to have been who put in an appearance in the death-chamber of a certain Archduke some time since at Vienna. It was while the dying man's family was gathered about his bedside that he opened his eyes, looked up, and appeared to be taking stock of those present. Then, turning to his daughter who was by his pillow, he whispered, "Tell me, who is the stranger, the lady in black who is kneeling between —— and —— at the foot of the bed? I do not remember to have seen

her before, but she appears to be praying very earnestly for me. Please tell her that I am grateful to her."

No one else in the room could see the figure, but at once all recognized the fitness of the Black Lady's visit at such a moment. One of her latest apparitions is said to have taken place in the old palace in Berlin, in 1878, on the eve of the death of the infant Prince Waldemar, when the sentry on duty fled to the guard-room, where he was at once arrested for desertion.

But, on the whole, Perchta's most historical manifestations of herself were those in the palace of Schönbrunn, near Vienna, in the years 1805 and 1809. On the earlier occasion, November 13, 1805, Napoleon's headquarters were established at Schönbrunn, whence he was directing the movements preceding the "Drei Kaiser Schlacht," as the Germans call it, of Austerlitz. In the middle of the night the Emperor was waked up by a terrific shaking of his bed to find that a lady, dressed in white, and looking very angry, had entered the room and was trying to overturn the bed on him. Springing out on the farther side from his visitor, he began to defend himself as best he could, and succeeded in making his escape from the room, thinking himself to have been the victim of a lunatic. Outside his door, however, the mameluke, Rustau, was sleeping soundly as ever, and when the two men returned into the inner apartment it was empty. Obviously, thought Napoleon, he must have had a very vivid nightmare. When he spoke of the affair the next day, however, to Marshal Berthier, what was his surprise to learn that Berthier, who had been sleeping in a room some distance from that of the Emperor, had also undergone the same experience—with this difference, however, that in Berthier's case the lady had actually succeeded in turning the bed over on top of him.

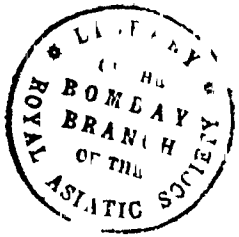
Napoleon said no more about it at the time, but when, nearly four years later, in 1809, he again made Schönbrunn his headquarters, after the battle of Wagram, he gave orders for Berthier to see that his own couch was prepared for him in some other apartment than that which he had formerly occupied. "Put me anywhere but in that accursed room," was Napoleon's command, and this was accordingly done, the Emperor having a notion that that particular room was haunted. This precaution, however,

availed him nothing. Once more he was awakened in the same unceremonious way; but this time the Weisse Frau's manner was even more menacing than before.

"Who are you?" demanded Napoleon, "and what do you want of me?"

"Who I am," replied the apparition in French, "that is known to Heaven, whose messenger I am. I have to tell you that, unless you desist from your efforts against Germany, you and yours will be utterly destroyed one day." With which she left him, going out through the door by which she had entered.

For a time he was inclined to pay heed to the warning, but the tide of continued prosperity and his subsequent marriage to the Archduchess Marie Louise did away with the impression to a great extent, although it may be that the Corsican in him thought to placate the hostile spirit somewhat by his alliance with the Hapsburgs, her especial protégés, thus, through his wife, placing himself under the Weisse Frau's protection. By the summer of 1812, indeed, the affair had almost escaped his mind, until a night of May in that year when he was passing through Dresden on his way to the Russian campaign. Once again he was waked up by a violent commotion, not in his own room but in one adjoining, and, on causing inquiries to be made, learned that General —— had been awakened by a mysterious visitor, a lady who had threatened him with disaster if he continued in his command. The General had ordered her out of the room, and had had to put forth all his strength to save his bed from being turned over on top of him. Finally, she had taken her departure. The General himself was killed in one of the earliest engagements of the war, in the following autumn.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